

Houses • Gardens • Food • Craft • Lifestyle

# COUNTRY HOMES & INTERIORS

MAY 2015

## Laid-back charm

Make spring cheerful with  
pops of playful pattern

Enter today!  
MY COUNTRY  
BUSINESS  
AWARDS  
2015

**'We own a  
bluebell wood'**  
Find dream homes,  
views, gardens

**Eat well at  
the weekend!**  
Relaxed recipes  
for days off

*Live with  
nature*

- \* Grow a wildflower meadow
- \* Craft beautiful paper birds
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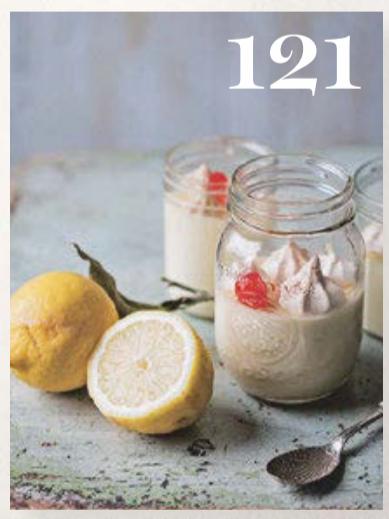


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# The home of modern country

68



• ON THE COVER

## Country homes

20 • **Dorset cottage** Surrounded by bluebells, a thatched property comes into its own every spring

30 • **East Sussex barn conversion** A crumbling flint stable has become a stunning open-plan family home

38 • **Yorkshire village house** Knocking through rooms has breathed new life into a former guest house

46 • **West Sussex townhouse** The owners of a house with mullioned windows have made their home lighter and brighter

**PLUS** Get-the-look ideas for every home

## Interiors & inspiration

8 **May** The things we can't live without

63 **Home notes**

58 • **Pops of pattern** Playful prints and subtle pastels cheer up spring rooms

68 **Good to grow** Pretty, practical buys for green-fingered people

99 **The country decorator** New ways of using floor tiles

## Creative crafts

63 **This month's online make** Sew a layered cushion. Find out how at [country-days.co.uk](http://country-days.co.uk)

74 • **Be inspired by birds** Simple paper crafts that celebrate our feathered friends

## Home improvements

85 • **Projects, plans & dreams** Conservatories, bathroom storage, range cookers »



80



## Seasonal food

### 16 Food notes

#### 121 • My perfect weekend food

Rosie Birkett's feel-good menu

## Lifestyle

### 18 Out & about notes

#### 54 • Enter the My Country Business Awards 2015

Starting your own company?  
You could win expert advice

### 80 My kind of country

Designer Ashley Thomas loves  
life in the Peak District

#### 115 • 10 ways to make life lovely

Happy thoughts and ideas for  
fashion, eco, travel and more

### 134 My country business

Illustrator Sue Scullard lives  
and works in Kent

### 162 My favourite view

Tamara Heber-Percy looks out from Loch  
Ewe in the Northwest Highlands

• ON THE COVER

## Gardens

### 15 Garden notes

#### 102 Growing gracefully

Starting a garden from scratch has been  
a joy for a couple in Wiltshire

### 110 Plant a flower meadow

Consider a more nature-friendly  
alternative to lawn to attract bees and butterflies

## Just for you

### 131 Travel offer

Tours of Italy's finest lakes and cities

### 133 Save 20% at Heathcote

& Ivory

Shop for fragrant treats for you or your home

### 142 Subscribe to Country Homes & Interiors

### 145 Travel offer

UK breaks for lovers of art and architecture

## Regulars

### 141 Coming next issue

### 147 Shopping directory

All the contact details and websites  
featured in this issue



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Blue Fin Building, 110 Southwark Street, London SE1 0SU  
**Telephone** 020 3148 5000 **Email** [countryhomes@timeinc.com](mailto:countryhomes@timeinc.com)

**Editor** Rhoda Parry

**Creative Director** Emma Williams 020 3148 7184

**Editorial Assistant** Columba Colivet 020 3148 7190

**Houses Editor** Vivienne Ayers 020 3148 7194

**Style Editor** Tamara Kelly 020 3148 7197

**Style Writer** Tara King 020 3148 7196

**Style Assistant** Nikki Bradley 020 3148 7195

**Contributing Editors** Sara Bird (Style) Janine Wookey (Gardens)

**Chief Sub Editor** Anne Esden 020 3148 7188

**Senior Sub Editors** Ruth Farnsworth 020 3148 7189; Marian McNamara 020 3148 7192; Susan Shepherd 020 3148 7187

**Art Editor** Meredith Davies 020 3148 7186

**Designer** Stephanie Allingham 020 3148 7898

**Editorial Production Manager** Nicola Tillman 020 3148 7891

**Art Production Designer** Chris Sagers 020 3148 7896

## Features Department (Homes Group)

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**Acting Features Editors** Karen Bray 020 3148 7347; Charlotte Luxford 020 3148 7138

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## Marketing

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## Publishing

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**PA to Managing Director** Lizzie Shepperson 020 3148 5651

**Publishing Director** Yvonne Ramsden 020 3148 7311

**Assistant to Publishing Director** Vera Purbrick 020 3148 7311

**Publisher** Belinda Cooper 020 3148 7666

**Assistant Publisher** Harriet Dixon 020 3148 7668

**Head of Client Partnerships** Alex Russell 020 3148 7570

## Production

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**Digital Producer** Andrew Howe 020 3148 3366

## Circulation

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**PA to Commercial Director** Lucie Gillespie 020 3148 7641

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**Creative Media Director** Matt Downs 020 3148 3681

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## Regional Advertising

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## Things I've seen, done and loved this month...

May is a cheerful month, I always think. The countryside feels full of flourishing, feel-good sights – from the delicate creamy-white blossom of hawthorn to pretty-as-a-picture garden tulips. These pops of seasonal colour are eagerly anticipated by us all, and inspired the team as we crafted the features in this month's issue. Meet Yvonne Henness, who fell in love with the bluebell wood belonging to the thatched Dorset cottage in which she now lives (page 20). Take inspiration from playful patterns in soft pastels to bring laid-back charm to rooms (page 58), and learn how to grow annual and perennial flower meadows in single or multi colourways (page 110). You can also enjoy a perfect weekend menu with the lovely food writer and stylist Rosie Birkett, as she shares her relaxed recipes for days off (page 121). Finally, don't miss your opportunity to enter the My Country Business Awards 2015 – see page 54 for all the details and your chance to win a money-can't-buy prize package.

Rhoda x

PS... Save 20% on Heathcote & Ivory's new fragrance range, Lily of the Valley.

To take advantage of our special discount, see page 133.



# May

Things we can't live without...

May days  
under the trees

Lace **tablecloth**, similar from £70,  
Quintessential English. Trestle **table**, similar  
from Ikea. **Stool**, for similar try  
St Ives, £60; **chair** (left), for similar try Suzy,  
£69, both John Lewis. Shell **windchime**, for  
similar try Capiz Solar, £46.50, Windchimes  
Corner. Other items, stylist's own.



## The fragrance of the month

**Lily of the Valley** eau de toilette, 50ml, £8, Heathcote & Ivory. See page 133 for an exclusive 20% discount.



**Adding a strip of lace to a glass lantern for flickering candlelight in the garden as dusk falls.**  
Glass tealight holder, similar from £4.95, Nkuku.

**Messing about on the river in stylish footwear.** Kate boat shoes, col Mustard, £65, Hotter.



**PINTEREST**  
For more things we can't live without, **follow us at countryhomesmag**

1



2



4



5



**1 Tea in a beautiful cup.** Lily of the Valley cup and saucer, H6cm, £16, Joanna Wood. **2 Traditional country storage.** Columbia Road shelf unit, H81xW98xD21cm, £229, BHS. **3 Scandi style in the kitchen.** Green Doodle Flower tea towel, £12, Jangneus. **4 Snuggling up in soft Merino wool.** Twill & Granite throw, col Lime, 120x220cm, £160, Scarlet & Argent. **5 Chic lighting ideas.** Libra Cowes candle lantern, H66x26cm sq, £160, John Lewis. »

## Country days



## Nature's colours



## See it, do it, love it

Go wild at Scotland's Big Nature Festival on 23-24 May at Levenhall Links near Edinburgh. Try a seabird cruise, dawn-chorus walks and pond dipping, [scottishbirdfair.org.uk](http://scottishbirdfair.org.uk).

Celebrate May Day in Wiltshire at the Downton Cuckoo Fair on 2 May with traditional maypole and morris dancing, [visitwiltshire.co.uk](http://visitwiltshire.co.uk).

Write poems inspired by the country at Chelsea Physic Garden's Creative Writing workshop on 22 May, £95, [chelseaphysicgarden.co.uk](http://chelseaphysicgarden.co.uk).

Help endangered honey bees – leave a shallow bowl of water in your garden for them to drink from on warm days.



## Dressing up a branch

White metal birdhouse **decoration**, H5cm, £3.99, Retreat Home.

# Mood of the moment

Bring indoors the gentle feel of the woodland with a decorator's palette of leafy greens and botanical prints.



(Clockwise, from top left) Muguet **fabrics**, cols Emerald/Ivory and Egg Shell Blue, £47 m, Sanderson. Lace side **plate**, £8; Sandringham cake **fork**, sold as part of seven-piece set with cake slice, £35; Sandringham **teaspoon**, sold as part of 24-piece cutlery set, £120, all Shabby Chic collection, House of Fraser. Totak **wallpaper**, £36 a roll, Levande collection, Scion. Alvine Spets **sheer curtain**, £10 a pair, Ikea. Kraft **photo corners**, £4.75 for 252; Khadi Papers **scrapbook**; handmade **papers**, all from a selection, Paperchase. Paint Spot **wallpaper**, col Custard/Apple, £57 a roll, Little Greene. **Paint chart** colours, from £38 for 2.5L Natural Emulsion, Edward Bulmer Pots of Paint. Easton **fabric**, col Sand, £24 m, Clarke & Clarke. Verdi **bowl** and **plates**, part of a 12-piece dining set, £49.50, Marks & Spencer. Bespoke 'May Day' illustrated party **invitation**, £2.50, Bash. Sisal Alexandra **flooring**, col Tofu, £42.45 sq m, Sisal & Seagrass. Brinley Cilantro **fabric**, £49.50 m, Romo. Sage green **twine**, £3, Pipii. All other items, stylist's own.



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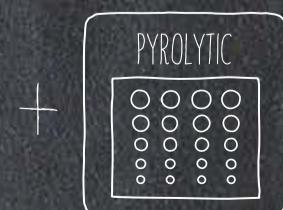
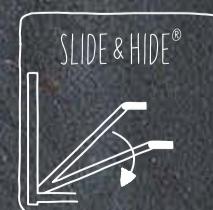
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Cooking inspires people. People inspire us.



# Home notes



## MEET OUR FAVOURITE DESIGNER MAKER

Nic Webb

Nic handcrafts spoons and other utensils from wood, using traditional tools that once belonged to his great-great-grandfather, a journeyman who worked as a carpenter in Devon, back in the 1800s.

### How do you make your spoons?

I work with axes, chisels, knives and other traditional hand tools. My spoons are made from greenwood – a fresh, living, unseasoned wood that's softer and easier to carve. They're then shaped and left to dry.

### What materials do you like to work with?

I see wood, ceramic, metal and paint as primal materials. They have an organic purity that allows me freedom when it comes to creating new pieces.

### What's your business ethos?

To produce simple objects of the finest quality and design.

### Tell us about your workshops.

At the end of the day, each student will have made a spoon and will have gained the skills needed to make more unaided.

**What inspires you?** The opportunity to convey and communicate ideas of worth.

### Your artistic style in three words?

Organic, pure and free.

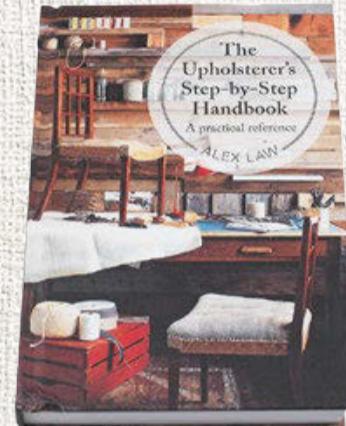
**Nic Webb,**  
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**com.**



Tallulah stencil,  
available in two  
sizes: A4, £6.99;  
A3, £14.99,  
Annie Sloan.

## Love stunning stencils

*It's been 25 years* since Annie Sloan developed her ever-popular decorative Chalk Paint. In celebration of its success, she's launching the perfect complement: a creative stencil collection. Each of the 21 designs has an abstract feel inspired by patterns and elements found in nature. Use them to create single designs or repeat motifs on walls, floors, furniture and fabric. We love Tallulah (above) – a bold floral print that is perfect for country-inspired decorating.



## Book of the month

Looking to re-cover dining chairs, or restore a family heirloom?

*The Upholsterer's Step-by-Step Handbook* (£20, Pavilion) by expert Alex Law is for you. Handy tips, instructive illustrations and inspiring photography will give you the confidence to take on any project.



## WE WANT THESE NOW...

Sainsbury's latest Country Fair collection offers a fresh take on rustic style, with every product selected for its homely charm. These sweet sketched mugs, £2.50 each, are the latest addition to our tea breaks.

## Country best Wardrobes



Give clothes a stylish home with these country-chic designs.

**1 CANTERBURY**, H201xW127xD60cm, £679.95, Melody Maison.

**2 MOOSE**, H168xW85xD55cm, £775, Loaf.

**3 KERATON**, H210xW130xD66cm, £2,195, Lombok.



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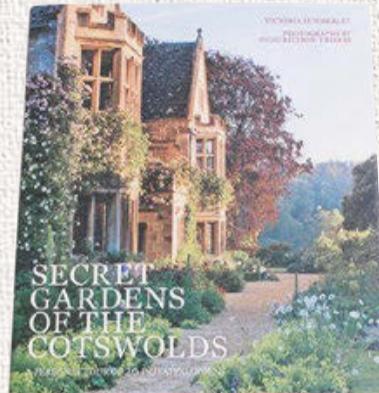
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# Garden notes



## MEET OUR FAVOURITE COUNTRY GARDEN EXPERT

Victoria  
Summerley

Gardener and writer, Victoria moved to the Cotswolds in 2012 to live the rural dream.

**What is the essence of a country garden?** The smell!

It needs to have the sweet scent of meadow grass mixed with clean fresh air.

**Must-have plants for a Cotswolds garden?** Roses, clematis and herbs, including lavender and nepeta, plus spring bulbs are classic Cotswold favourites. Grasses are important, too – they echo the surrounding countryside.

**Does size matter?** No. Good gardens are more about creating a sense of place.

**Do you prefer a formal or a relaxed look?** Either style is good, but a combination works well, too, such as billows of lavender or hardy geraniums softening the edges of neat brick or stone paths. A focal point, though, is a must. It can be a rose-covered arch, a birdbath or just a large pot.

**Victoria's book, *Secret Gardens of the Cotswolds* (£20, Frances Lincoln) was**

published earlier this year. Follow Victoria's blog at [awkwardhill.co.uk](http://awkwardhill.co.uk).



## Get busy on your borders

**It's warm enough now** to plan a good summer show. To sow annuals such as calendula and cosmos (above) outside, clear weeds, rake the soil until fine and sprinkle seed where you want the plants to grow. Add nicotiana, zinnia, lavatera and love-lies-bleeding to prolong floral colour into autumn. Plant out any tender plants that you've been nurturing under glass. Kick-start herbs such as basil, dill and marjoram in beds, fill gaps in the borders with bedding plants from garden centres and stake lupins or delphiniums before they grow too tall.

## WE WANT THESE NOW...

Pretty, prickle-resistant gauntlets in Laura Ashley's Cressida print and goatskin are perfect for keeping thorny roses in hand. £19.95, from *Garden Divas*.



## WOW-FACTOR PLANT

### *Iris 'Bientôt l'Été'*

Launching at the RHS Chelsea Flower Show this month, *Iris 'Bientôt l'Été'* is a spectacular new must-have from Cayeux Iris and just one of its 60 sensational irises in the show. From £12.75 a plant.

To order, call 0800 096 4811 for June to October delivery.



## Country best Insect homes



### Encourage wild visitors...

#### 1 LADYBIRD AND LACEWING

**BOX**, H30xW13xD12cm, £19.99, RSPB.

**2 EARWIG HOUSE**, H20xW14.5xD12cm, £9.99, Waitrose Garden.

**3 BUTTERFLY FEEDER/HOUSE**, H36xW15xD13cm, £29.95, The Worm That Turned.



**TO DO THIS MONTH...** The Chelsea chop: cut back late-season perennials to stop them flopping over before they flower.

# Food notes



## MEET OUR FAVOURITE SPELT PRODUCER

### Roger Saul

As owner of Sharpham Park, an organic farm near Glastonbury, Somerset, which produces an award-winning range of spelt products, including muesli and risottos, Roger is keen to spread the word about the health benefits of the ancient grain, particularly for those who prefer to avoid wheat. We asked Roger...

#### What makes Sharpham spelt so special?

It's unique because we have the only mill in the UK that is totally dedicated to milling spelt grown organically and farmed using sustainable methods. We also own one of the few de-huskers in the country, so our grain stays naturally protected for longer, which ensures freshness.

#### Any recipe suggestions?

My favourite is beetroot speltotto with goats' cheese and spinach, above, a recipe from my new book, *Spelt* (£16.99, Nourish).

**Tell us something that we don't know...** The Romans referred to spelt as their 'marching grain', and today's explorers, including Sir Ranulph Fiennes, have relied on spelt in its various forms to help them through gruelling expeditions to the North and South Poles.



Sharpham Park products are sold at Waitrose and farmshops. Contact 01458 844080 or visit [sharphampark.com](http://sharphampark.com) for details.

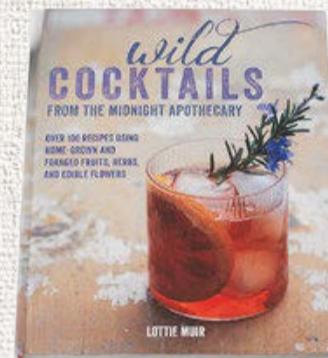


## Indulge in local honey

***It's the start of the honey season,*** a wonderful excuse to enjoy honey well beyond breakfast time. It is delicious on moist tea bread and sunflower-seed loaves, spiced cakes and sultana-packed buns. It works a treat in a marinade for chicken or lamb, or as a sticky glaze on sausages. Drizzle over root vegetables before roasting, and bananas or figs before baking. For a sweet treat with a difference, next time you make a bread and butter pudding, try spreading the triangles with honey, too, as you layer up the dish.

## Book of the month

Edible garden flowers, fragrant herbs and foraged plants, such as meadowsweet and red clover, all feature in alcoholic drinks in *Wild Cocktails* by mixologist Lottie Muir (£16.99, Cico Books). Make ours a Woodland Martini, a Wild Violet Sour or maybe a Lavender Gin Fizz.



## WE WANT THIS NOW...

With a flavour as fresh as the woods in spring, creamy, slightly crumbly Cornish Yarg comes wrapped in nettle leaves - also try the new Wild Garlic version in bright green ramson leaves, £26 for 1kg, Paxton & Whitfield.



## Country best Cake tins



**The perfect way to save a slice for later...**

**1 ORLA KIELY**, £37 for 5, Unique & Unity.

**2 MARY BERRY**, £35 for 3, John Lewis.

**3 EMMA BRIDGEWATER**, £34 for 3, John Lewis.



## AT HOME...

We love the combination of our cabinets painted in Snow, walls painted in Lead Light and Somerton Baskets from £28  
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NEPTUNE

# Out & about



## MEET OUR FAVOURITE SHOP OWNER

### Julie Murnaghan

Julie's tempting shop has beautifully styled rooms filled with decorative antiques and vintage homewares.

#### What inspired you to open your shop, The Old Pill Factory?

I have always loved antiques, restoration, textiles and, above all, colour.

Opening the shop has been everything I dreamed of and more - people who visit really appreciate that buying a pre-loved piece of furniture is a lovely homely thing to do.

**How would you describe the shop's style?** Individual, affordable, colourful and fun. Our stock comes from far and wide and includes handpainted antique furniture, lamps, linens, mirrors and more.

#### What makes your shop so special?

Our talented dealers and staff - we have a fabric designer, interior designer, stylist, potter, picture framer and an illustrator. In fact, there is so much beauty and quality in our products, it's sometimes difficult to let them go!

**The Old Pill Factory,**  
**53 High Street, Witney,**  
**Oxfordshire**  
**OX28 6JA,**  
**01993**  
**701013,**  
**theold**  
**pillfactory.**  
**com.**



## Make time for Alice...

**It's 150 years** since the publication of Lewis Carroll's *Alice in Wonderland* and you can join in the celebrations nationwide. On 1 May, head for the Alice Town Trails in Llandudno where an interactive digital app brings the story to life - follow the White Rabbit landmarks from the railway station to Happy Valley gardens ([visitllandudno.org.uk](http://visitllandudno.org.uk)). Enjoy a tea party and storytelling in Oxford as part of Alice's Day on 4 July ([storymuseum.org.uk](http://storymuseum.org.uk)). Or see some original illustrations of Alice by artist Eric Kincaid at RHS Rosemoor Gardens, Devon, 27 June-23 August ([rhs.org.uk](http://rhs.org.uk)).

## Country best Food festivals

**Be inspired to create great dishes at food gatherings with top chefs and culinary experts...**

#### MALTON, YORKSHIRE

More than 160 food and drink stalls will welcome visitors to the Malton Food Lovers Festival from 23 to 24 May. Enjoy cookery lessons, talks and tastings with chefs Valentine Warner, Prue Leith and Andrew Pern, and food writers Diana Henry and William Sitwell. Call 01653 692849, [maltonyorkshire.co.uk](http://maltonyorkshire.co.uk).

#### SHANAGARRY, COUNTY CORK

At Darina Allen's cookery school, Ballymaloe Lit Fest (below) lures international chefs, food authors, foragers, wine experts and gardeners offering workshops, talks and cookery demos. An exciting programme features chefs April Bloomfield and Mark Hix, brewmaster Garrett Oliver and drinks writer David Broom. From 15 to 17 May, 00 353 21 464 5777, [litfest.ie](http://litfest.ie).



- **ON COURSE...** Improve your dressmaking skills and learn how to make a pretty 'Mathilde' blouse at craft shop Butterfly Bright in Sherborne, Dorset on 9 May. The course costs £95 (bring your own pattern, fabric and sewing tools). Call 01935 817303, [butterflybright.com](http://butterflybright.com).

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LIFE IN YOUR  
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# Woodland treasure

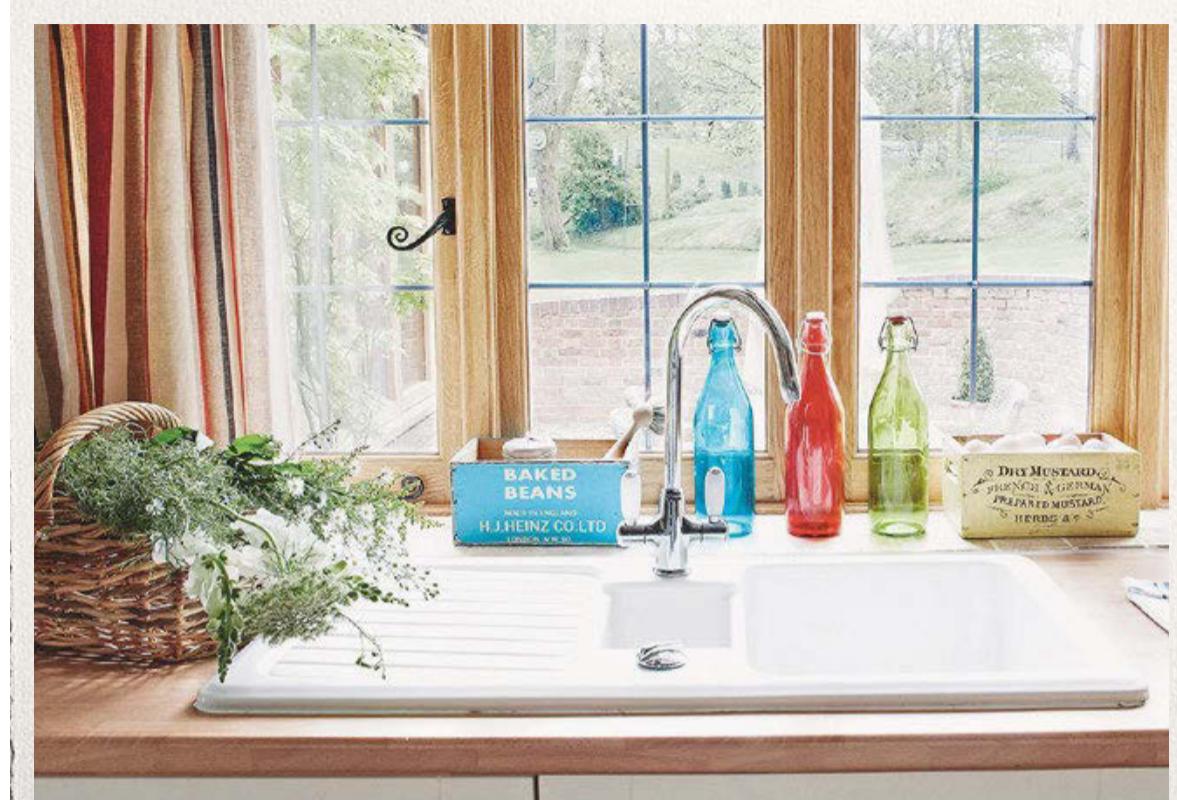
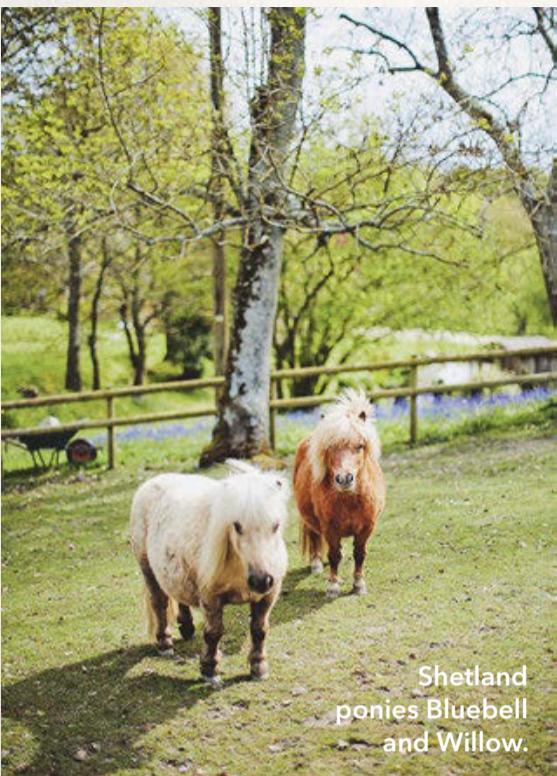
YVONNE HENNESS' COTTAGE, WITH ITS BLUEBELL WOOD, HAS  
ALL THE INGREDIENTS OF A DREAM COUNTRY HOME





**The house** The pretty thatched cottage is surrounded by woodland, some of which is carpeted with bluebells in May. It's the perfect spot for Yvonne to sit and relax with Merley (opposite). »

## Dorset cottage



### *What makes this house a home...*

‘It’s a hidden treasure – a cottage surrounded by woodland – and it offers warmth, security and peacefulness’



**Dining area** Yvonne has upcycled picture frames to create stylish shelves. Chairs, seat pads, curtain fabric, Laura Ashley. Striped cushions, HomeSense. Tea set, Emma Bridgewater. >>





*Garden room* A pale palette maximises the natural light. **Sofa, coffee table**, David Phipp House Furnisher. **Armchair, Neptune**. **Bike cushion**, HomeSense. **Pendant light, rug**, John Lewis. **Lamp**, Laura Ashley.

**'We were looking for our dream home,'** says Yvonne Henness. 'My husband, Peter, wanted something with a long drive and I wanted a thatched cottage.' One thing they both settled on, though, was the need for a secluded country setting. 'At the estate agent's, someone overheard us and said, "What about the house in the woods?" It was the only property we saw.'

At first, it was the exterior of the property that caught their attention. 'The owners let us roam the grounds and we came across the beautiful bluebell wood, which was in full bloom. There was just nothing else like it. We fell in love with it.'

The house had been on the market for three years and was in a poor state of repair, particularly the grounds. Yvonne had recently sold a business, so the timing was right for her to take on a big renovation project. The couple's plan was to start work on the grounds rather than the interior. 'It was all so overgrown. We didn't even know we had a pond, for instance. We brought in landscapers with a bulldozer to clear it out for spring, and a friend built a duck house for us.'

The landscapers were on site for three months tidying up, as well as creating a drive with a turning circle, plus a boundary for the property. In addition, the pretty walled garden, which had been a dumping ground, was cleared and a fountain put in.

Yvonne and Peter had to wait two years before planning permission was granted so that they could have a piggery in the grounds pulled down. The builders then spent nine months removing it and putting in a barn, which contains an office and workspace for Yvonne to run her business, Home in Time, plus a triple garage, garden store and games room.

Attention then turned to the house, where a green-oak-framed garden room was built with views on three sides, making the most of the beautiful surroundings. Windows in the house were removed and replaced with period-style oak-framed ones to match the garden room. In addition, a new bathroom, shower room, downstairs cloakroom and kitchen were installed.

'When we bought the house, the interior was very gloomy, with dark furniture and parquet floors,' says Yvonne, 'so my priority was to lighten it up. We had cream carpeting laid and every wall painted in an off-white shade. That did the trick – it gave me a blank canvas. I wanted to give it a nostalgic and slightly French feel. I love using furnishings and accessories to create interest.'

She and Peter now feel they've reached the point where they can sit back and enjoy their house. 'I've lived and breathed this place every day. It's an ongoing project – there's always a fence to repair or a tree that's come down. But sitting in the garden room and watching the wildlife is just bliss.'

**Home in Time, 01202 881884, [home-in-time.co.uk](http://home-in-time.co.uk).**



### At home with...

**Owners** Yvonne Henness, who runs home accessories business Home in Time, and her husband Peter, CEO of a manufacturing company. They moved here in 2006 and live with Retriever Merley, Billy the cat and Shetland ponies Bluebell and Willow.

**House** Three-bedroom former gamekeeper's cottage, dating back to 1900, set in 14 acres.

### On our doorstep...

**Visit...** 'Wimborne, a 12th-century market town with a minster, riverside walks, pretty bridges and meandering streets lined with independent shops.'

**Shop at...** 'Carnival Flowers (01202 885656, [carnivalflowers.co.uk](http://carnivalflowers.co.uk)) in Wimborne. It's a great florist that has an alternative flower choice. Also, Toad Hall Country Vintage (01202 880487) where I sell my things. It's an emporium with over 50 antique and vintage businesses and a tearoom.'

### Go for a meal at...

'The Tickled Pig (01202 886778, [thetickledpig.co.uk](http://thetickledpig.co.uk)) in Wimborne, for its homegrown and organic produce – perfect for morning coffee and evening meals.'

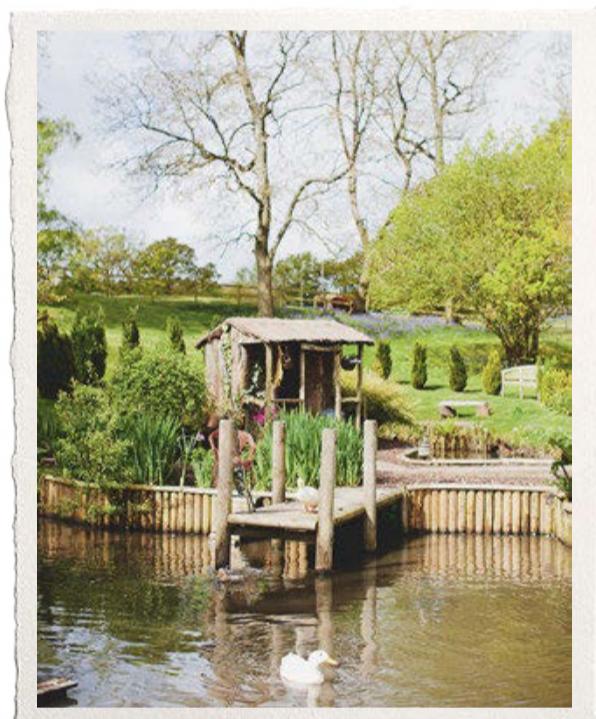
## Dorset cottage



**Main bedroom** Fresh blue and white make this a tranquil haven. **Bed**, David Phipp House Furnisher. **Bedlinen, throw**, John Lewis. **Cushions**, The White Company. **Curtains**, Laura Ashley.



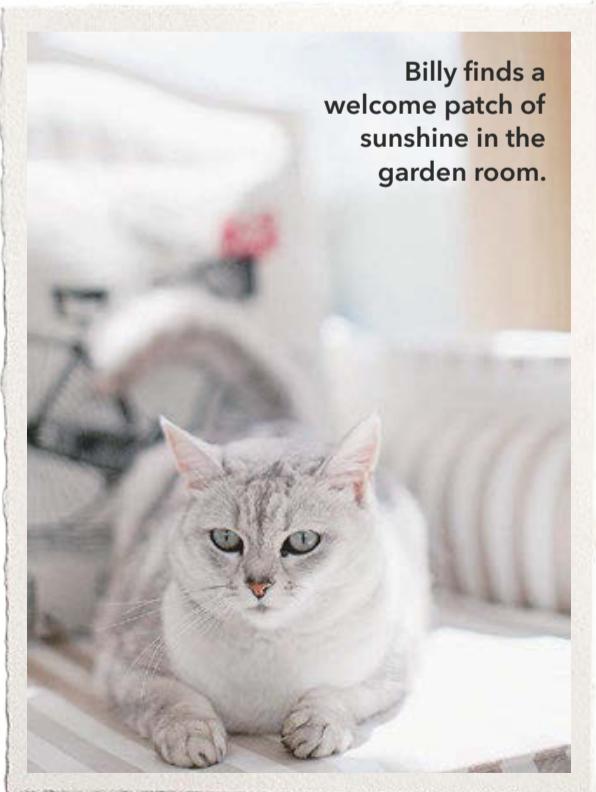
*What we love most about living here...*  
'Its location. We love the buzzards that circle in the thermals above and the deer that appear up the drive. We can also sit quietly and watch badgers as they come out to feed'



**Guest bedroom** Butterfly cushions give a touch of spring. **Bed**, John Lewis. **Cushions**, The Range. **Bedside drawers**, Furlong Furniture.



Billy finds a welcome patch of sunshine in the garden room.





**Bathroom** An elegant roll-top bath and shutters create a French feel. Walls, painted in Limestone by Neptune. Bath, Heritage Bathrooms. Towel ladder, stool, Home in Time. »

Be inspired by...

# Yvonne's bathroom



**1** Vogue July 1956 by Henry Clarke **print** in natural ash frame, H45xW44cm, £66.47, Easyart.  
**2** Rue de Marli Citron de Vigne **bath salts**, £25 for 380g, Iris. **3** Penela **towels**, from £5 each, Urbanara. **4** Chinese distressed elm **stool**, H51xW50xD25cm, £175, Orchid. **5** 'La Boutique de Fleurs' enamel **vase**, H20cm, £6.95, Live Laugh Love. **6** Antiqued wooden **ladder**, H170xW50cm, £25, Sweetpea & Willow. **7** Vintage Peshtemal hand **towels**, 80x48cm, £12 each, Cotton & Olive. **8** Bude **bath**, H76xW185xD77cm, £995, The Cast Iron Bath Company.

Modern  
Country  
Classic



## Towel ladder

Take bathroom storage to new heights, hanging towels to air on the rungs of a ladder.

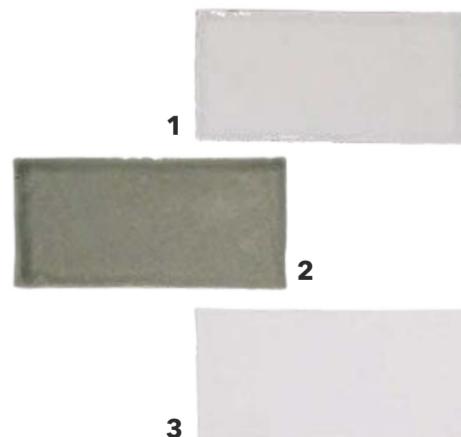
### Need to know...

This flexible storage option simply rests against the wall, yet is easy to move within comfortable reach of the bath. Country-style options in wood are popular, but if you choose a ladder in untreated oak, give it a protective coat of hard wax oil once a year. The towel ladder's stablemate is an ingenious design with shelves instead of rungs. Each shelf is corralled by an upstand, keeping toiletries and stacked towels in check.

### Where to buy...

- Cox & Cox for a rustic oak ladder.
- Grace & Glory for a ladder shelf.
- Graham and Green for a ladder made from bamboo.

Find the perfect  
**brick wall tiles**



**1** Moonstone; **2** Fossil; **3** Beach White, all £1.85 each, Valencia collection, Fired Earth.

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# A perfect balance

NOT CONTENT WITH CREATING A BEAUTIFUL HOME FROM A CRUMBLING BARN,  
SUSIE PFEIFFER THEN ADDED AN AWARD-WINNING EXTENSION



*The house* Dark metal window frames and wide windows bring a contemporary twist to the vernacular knapped flint of the original barn. »

## East Sussex barn conversion



**Kitchen** Units painted to match the granite give a sleek feel, with a pair of salvaged pillars framing the window adding architectural interest. Units, similar from Harvey Jones Kitchens. Painted in Down Pipe by Farrow & Ball.



### At home with...

**Owners** Susie Pfeiffer, who runs interior architecture and design business Pfeiffer Design, and her husband, Stephan, a director of construction company Tasker Catchpole. They live here with their two children, Eloise, 18, and Samson, 16, their two Maine Coon cats and a Border Collie cross.

**House** A converted and restored three-bedroom 18th-century Sussex flint barn and an eco-friendly contemporary extension comprising six rooms and a guest house.

*A happy childhood* on a farm in East Sussex lured Susie Pfeiffer back when she and husband, Stephan, were looking for a place to bring up their family in the 1990s. 'I was pregnant with Eloise when my parents told us they were thinking of selling a plot of land with a barn close to their farm,' says Susie. They didn't have to think long about buying it as it was not only near Susie's parents, but it would also be a glorious place to bring up children.

Susie's father had bought the land with planning permission 10 years earlier. The flint barn, which had been used as a stable, was crumbling but ripe for conversion. The couple met the local planners and, bringing their own expertise to the project, drew up a new set of plans for a barn that would be suitable for open-plan living and they were accepted.

Once the first phase of construction was well underway, Susie and Stephan

travelled a few times to Houdan in northern France to scour architectural salvage yards. They were fortunate to find reclaimed oak flooring, original stone fireplaces, an incredible marble bath discarded by a smart hotel and a set of magnificent doors.

Susie often designs a space around a beautiful piece of art, furniture or architectural detail and was keen to do that in her own home. This meant they often waited for months, even years, before they stumbled across the right item, but when they did they were ecstatic. 'We happily camped with our young family on the ground floor for a few years before we had enough money to continue with the restoration work upstairs,' says Susie.

The conversion was the ideal job for Susie to cut her teeth on while forging ahead with her interior design work. It took almost 20 years, culminating in an en-suite bedroom on the »

### Dining hall

A reclaimed fireplace provides a dramatic focal point in this towering space, with a limed oak refectory table picking up its honeyed tones. Table, The Antique Table. Chairs, Made. Gilt frame mirror, Swag.



*What we love most about living here...*

‘We wouldn’t live anywhere else. The beauty of the South Downs and views over the brooks of the river Ouse are unrivalled’

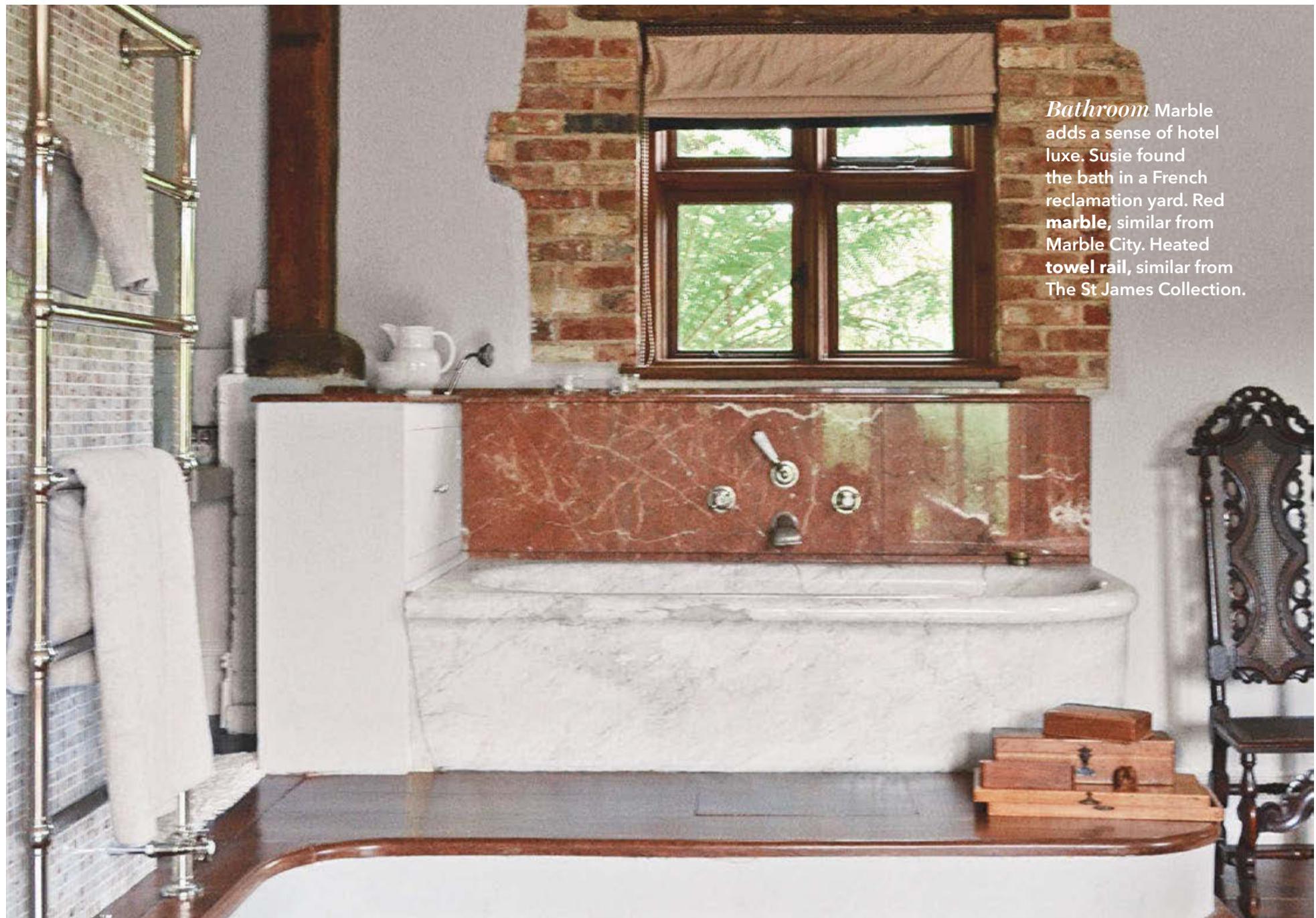
*What makes this house a home...*

‘It’s a combination of cosy and airy, and antique and contemporary. Always full of family and guests, it’s also the perfect party house’



**Main bedroom**

Gentle colours and soft fabrics lend an easy feel. Como velvet curtains, upholstery, Voyage; both made by Victoria Gayle Interiors. Glo-Ball light, Flos at Heal's. Faux fur throw, Zara Home.



**Bathroom** Marble adds a sense of hotel luxe. Susie found the bath in a French reclamation yard. Red marble, similar from Marble City. Heated towel rail, similar from The St James Collection.

mezzanine level reached via a modern staircase leading from the dining hall.

In 2011 the Pfeiffers were ready to embark on the extension they craved. 'We always knew we were going to extend, so most of the amenities for the new building were already in place.'

Living in an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, they had to come up with a design that was compatible with both the rural landscape and the barn. 'We couldn't have done it without our incredible architect, Anthony Harrison of MHD Architects. He had created the winery in Plumpton, which gave us ideas and inspired our design.'

The project began with a huge dig-out at the side of the barn to keep the roof of the extension below the level of the historic barn. The new extended house was designed and built to keep the carbon footprint low. Vernacular knapped flint, slate and bricks were utilised with glass and decking. The

latest ecological and green technologies were also used, including a ground-source heat pump to provide heating and hot water, a rainwater harvester to supply the toilets and garden, an inconspicuous photovoltaic slate system to produce electricity, plus a sedum roof to reduce rainwater run-off and flood risk.

Over the past couple of years the house has evolved into playing an important part in Susie's work. Clients love coming here and usually find an aspect of it they admire that can be related to their own interiors. To crown all the efforts that went into Susie's house, in 2013 she and her team received the Sussex Heritage Award for their contemporary extension. It made all the hard work even more worthwhile. »

**Susie Pfeiffer, 01273 512873, [pfeifferdesign.co.uk](http://pfeifferdesign.co.uk). For Susie's guest house, visit [ruralretreats.co.uk](http://ruralretreats.co.uk).**



**Main bedroom** The tapestry chair, an heirloom, creates a vintage feel. Sue has left it in its original condition to let the embroidery sing out. **Dressing table, Gorringes.**

## East Sussex barn conversion



### Guest house extension

With rural views from all its large windows, the prize-winning guest house sleeps four and is near Lewes and Glyndebourne - a perfect spot to explore East Sussex.

### On our doorstep...

**Visit...** 'Anne of Cleves House (01273 474610, [sussexpast.co.uk](http://sussexpast.co.uk)) in Lewes. This 15th-century Wealden hall house, a divorce settlement by Henry VIII to his fourth wife, gives an insight into how the Tudors and Elizabethans lived, worked and relaxed at home.'

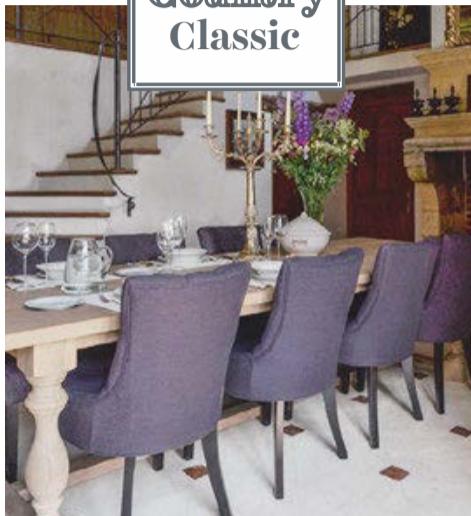
**Shop at...** 'The Needlemakers ([needlemakers.co.uk](http://needlemakers.co.uk)) in Lewes, a historic landmark with shops selling homeware, great clothes, jewellery and bric-a-brac. Enjoy homemade cake and tea in the cosy café.'

**Go for a meal at...** 'Le Magasin (01273 474720) in the Cliffe area of Lewes. Delicious food is served in this buzzy café/bistro, where the ambience is relaxed and the décor is charming.'

Be inspired by...

# Susie's dining hall

**Modern Country Classic**



## Upholstered chairs

Fixed upholstery fits like a glove, showing off shapely chairs.

### Need to know...

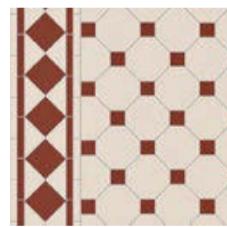
The fabric you choose must have passed 'rub' tests to confirm it is up to the job and must be fire retardant (or be used with a fire retardant liner). Personalise with details such as buttons, contrast piping or domed decorative nails. Alternatively, try removable tailored covers.

### Where to buy...

- The Dining Chair Company for a wide range of upholstered chairs.
- Multiyork for chairs with tailored covers.
- The Odd Chair Company for traditional upholstered chairs.

## Find the perfect decorative tiles

1



2



3



1 Octagon White, 15.1cm sq (with red inserts), £122.81 sq m; 2 Arcadia Grey, 30cm sq, £89.98 sq m; 3 Epoque Rose, 30cm sq, £99.99 sq m, all Original Style.



For more ideas go to [housetohome.co.uk/countryhomesandinteriors](http://housetohome.co.uk/countryhomesandinteriors)

1 Minera **fabric**, col Imperial Purple, £37 m, Romo. 2 Norfolk Path framed **print**, H50xW100cm, £60, Arthouse. 3 Edme soup **tureen**, 1.5L, £162, Wedgwood. 4 Polish glass tapered **jug**, 1.7L, H21cm, £34, David Mellor. 5 Flynn scoop-back **chair** in Midnight Black, H93xW56xD61cm, £129, Made. 6 Ornate Gold Gilt Monaco **mirror**, 153x122cm, £349, Ayers & Graces. 7 Chrome-effect five-arm **candelabra**, H56xW41xD20cm, £60, John Lewis. 8 Edinburgh extending **table**, H76xL150-240xD90cm, £1,175, Neptune.



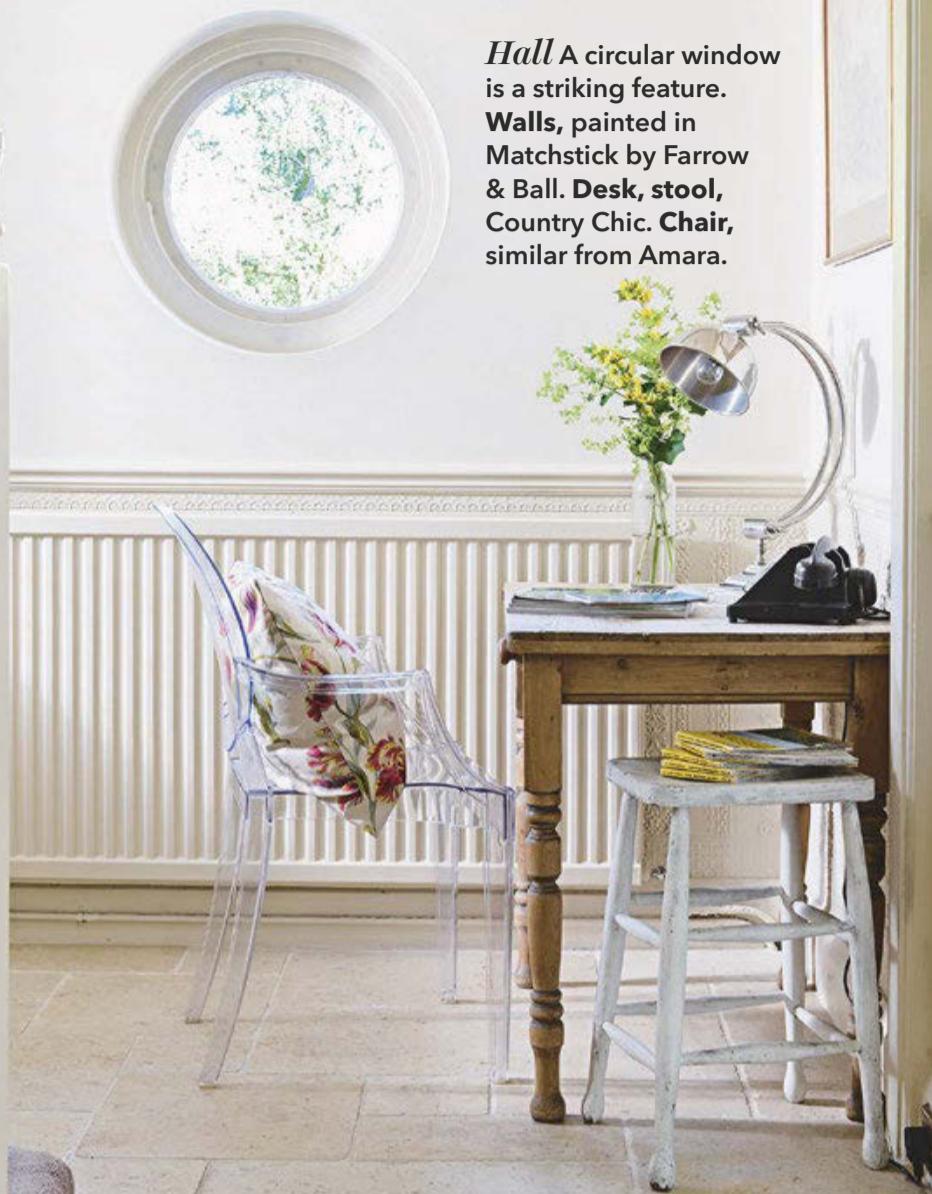
# Northern light

CLARE GELDART BROUGHT A NEGLECTED GUEST HOUSE BACK TO LIFE USING A PALETTE OF PALE COUNTRY COLOURS

**Dining area** Clare (opposite) teamed the chunky zinc-topped table with painted chairs. Zinc-topped table, chairs, Country Chic. Blinds, Oka. Marble floor tiles, Tom Howley. Jute rug, Next. »



**Hall** A circular window is a striking feature. **Walls**, painted in Matchstick by Farrow & Ball. **Desk, stool, Country Chic. Chair**, similar from Amara.



## At home with...

**Owners** Clare Geldart, a marketing professional, and her husband Jonathan, an international business adviser. They moved into the house in April 2011.

**House** Detached Edwardian house built in 1904.

**Clare and Jonathan** Geldart were city commuters looking for the antidote to their high-pressure careers when they bought a dated, former guest house near Harrogate. Jonathan was born and raised in Yorkshire and they'd been planning to move back for a long time; then they spotted this house, with its warren of small, dark rooms and its tranquil, rural location.

'I had always wanted to renovate a period property and this was an ideal opportunity,' says Clare.

She instinctively knew what was required to bring it up to date. 'I am passionate about interior design and couldn't wait to get started,' she says. 'A lot of problems cropped up as we went along but the builder was local and had worked on the house before, so he knew its quirks and foibles.'

Jonathan was working away in China while the house was renovated, so Clare single-handedly managed the

project long-distance from London as the couple had decided to continue to keep on their London home while the renovation work on their new home was being done.

'Many of the rooms were decorated in dark, period colours, with busy wallpaper and heavy silk curtains,' says Clare. 'At first I thought the changes would be cosmetic, but the more I came to understand the house, the more I realised that getting it right would involve a fundamental rethink of the layout.'

Because it had been a guest house, the property had been divided up into smaller rooms, so Clare had all the stud walls taken out to restore it to its original layout. The kitchen was tiny so Clare merged it with the utility room, cloakroom and store to create one large, open room with enough space for a dining table.

'My father was an architect and that has given me an appreciation »

**Kitchen** A breakfast bar creates a sociable divide between kitchen and dining areas. **Units**, Tom Howley; painted in Lamp Room Gray by Farrow & Ball. **Clock**, Country Chic. **Pendant lights**, Tom Howley.



*What makes this house a home...*

‘It is light, calm and comfortable – and that allows us to escape all the pressures of work’

## Yorkshire village house

**Snug** The artwork was bought from the Guggenheim Museum in New York. **Sofa**, Laura Ashley. **Coffee table**, Country Chic.



*What we love most about living here...*

‘The village location close to Harrogate means we get the best of both worlds’



**Main bedroom** Clare gave the Ikea wardrobe a distressed paint effect to match the dresser from Country Chic. **Bed**, Nights in Iron. **Throw**, The White Company. **Side tables**, Next.



### Guest bedroom

The bed was refinished in a distressed paint effect to achieve the softer look Clare wanted. The stool (opposite) is an inherited piece. Bed, similar from Crown French Furniture. Blinds, Cabbages & Roses.

of buildings. You have to respect a building and work with it,' says Clare.

Having decided on a palette of pale colours, Clare took her time choosing furniture and paint shades, painting swatches on the walls so she could look at the way the tones changed according to the time of day.

'I have a creative side but in the corporate world you have to be decisive,' says Clare. 'I applied that business-like precision to the house. During the renovation there were texts and phone calls flying backwards and forwards, and many sticky notes left lying around the house, so the tradespeople knew exactly what needed to be done.'

The couple left a lot of furniture behind in their previous home and little of what came with them has survived in its original form. Clare has repainted and reinvented everything from soft furnishings to wardrobes.

'I am constantly updating things around the house,' she says. 'I never

rush into anything. I would honestly rather sit on orange boxes than make a hasty decision on a sofa and find I've made a mistake.'

Clare did make a mistake, however, when she bought a guest bed online only to discover that its 'distressed' look was shiny and not at all what she had envisaged.

'I was very distressed myself until Polly Medley of Country Chic took the bed away and finished it properly. She really saved the day – it looks lovely now,' says Clare.

It's taken three years for Clare to achieve her early vision for the house, and she and Jonathan recently finished landscaping the garden to pull it all together.

'It feels as though the house has come alive again,' says Clare. 'When we bought it the rooms were tired and the whole place seemed to feel sorry for itself. It just needed someone to listen and understand what was necessary to bring it back to life.'

### On our doorstep...

**Visit...** 'The beautiful RHS Garden Harlow Carr (0845 265 8070, rhs.org.uk). And no trip to Harrogate is complete without a visit to the Royal Pump Room Museum (01423 556188, harrogate.gov.uk) to discover everything there is to know about England's premier spa town.'

**Shop at...** 'Country Chic (07788 443619, country-chic.net) near Harrogate. It's my favourite independent furniture shop – the owner, Polly Medley, sells one-off pieces of furniture and lovely home accessories.'

**Go for a meal at...** 'La Oliva (01423 531422, laoliva.co.uk) in Harrogate. It is a Spanish tapas restaurant and bar that has found a niche among all the lovely cafés and restaurants in the area.' »



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Be inspired by...

# Clare's kitchen

**Modern Country Classic**



## Rise-and-fall light

Dine in style beneath a light fitting that raises for family breakfasts and lowers for an intimate dinner.

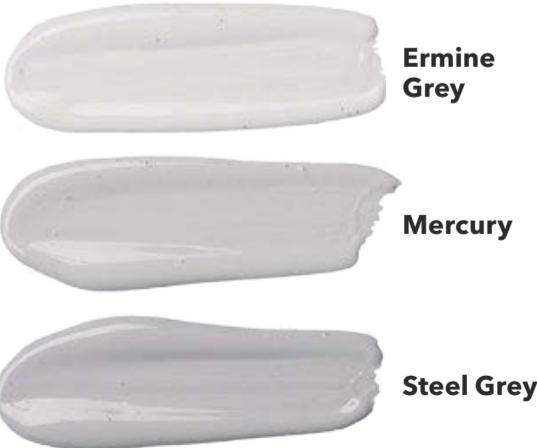
### Need to know...

Choose from a traditional style with a pulley and counterweight, or a modern mechanism with pull-down handle and cable. Check before you buy for a smooth rise-and-fall action. A deep shade will reduce glare from the bulb; add a dimmer switch for extra flexibility. If your ceilings are high, ask about a longer flex. Two or more lamps fixed to a movable horizontal bar are ideal above a longer table.

### Where to buy...

- **Davey Lighting** for a dome pendant.
- **Holloways of Ludlow** for glass, metal and ceramic pendants.
- **John Lewis** for modern pendants.

## Find the perfect cupboard paint



All £48.50 for 2.5L Acrylic Eggshell, Sanderson.



For more ideas go to [housetohome.co.uk/countryhomesandinteriors](http://housetohome.co.uk/countryhomesandinteriors)

- 1 Triple heart detail **chalkboard**, H39xW24xD4cm, £8.99, Sass & Belle at Mollie & Fred.
- 2 Cecile beech bar **chair**, H98.5xW49xD52cm, £115, Croft Collection, John Lewis.
- 3 Old Town wood and metal **clock**, diameter 91cm, £165, The Orchard.
- 4 Grey wash willow **basket**, H33xW38xD49cm, £31.50, Drift Living.
- 5 Patterned storage **tins**, H15xW10.5xD10.5cm, £18 for 3, At Home with Ashley Thomas at Debenhams.
- 6 Berta Ruta **fabric**, col Beige, £8 m, Ikea.
- 7 Boston painted large **sideboard**, H81xW142xD45cm, £449, The Cotswold Company.



# Natural beauty

ANNA CHATTERTON-CROSSE TURNED A DARK, FORBIDDING PROPERTY INTO A BRIGHT AND WELCOMING HOME

**Living room** The limestone fireplace takes centre stage. The painting of a Sussex scene is by Roger Billington of Felpham Art Group. **Candlesticks, Lavender** House & Garden. **Walls,** painted in All White by Farrow & Ball. »





**Garden** Mirrors reflect light round Anna's garden and back into her kitchen. **Mirrors**, Exclusive Mirrors. **Garden furniture**, similar from John Lewis.



**Dining room** (also opposite) The back of the bookcase is painted grey to show off treasured pieces. **Bookcase**, similar from Maison. **Chairs**, La Residence Interiors. **Floor tiles**, Eurotiles & Bathrooms.



## At home with...

**Owners** Anna Chatterton-Crosse and her husband, Julian Chatterton, both city lawyers, who also run an online home accessories boutique.

**House** A four-bedroom Grade II-listed brick townhouse, dating from around 1880.

**When seasoned renovators** Anna Chatterton-Crosse and her husband, Julian, first saw their period home they knew restoration would be needed and it would have to be based around its historic windows. 'The stone mullioned windows were partially obscured by curtains, but we could see how magnificent they were,' says Anna. It was the windows, in fact, that sold the property to the couple along with many more original features.

'Where other house-hunters had been put off by the poky kitchen and garish décor, Jules and I knew we'd found a gem,' says Anna. Designed by Joseph Hansom, the architect of Arundel Cathedral, the house had languished on the market for several months. 'We could understand why,' she says. 'The overpowering mix of black, brass, fake gold and numerous florals didn't do it justice.'

Anna and Julian bought the property and worked on the improvements. 'We had intended it to be a weekend bolthole,' says Anna. 'But then we fell in love with the house and lifestyle in West Sussex. By not rushing into the project, we had a chance to live in the house and decide what changes to make.'

In March 2014, Anna and Julian's six-month project began. The aim was to pare back the house, introduce a sophisticated muted palette and let the natural beauty of the period features speak for themselves. 'When considering how to remodel, we let the beautiful windows and stunning views dictate our design,' says Anna.

A bedroom at the front of the house, with views of the sea and coastal plains, became a cosy first-floor living room. At the back of »



*What we love most about living here...*

‘The views are stunning and in the evening they take on an almost magical quality’

## West Sussex townhouse

**Main bedroom** Mirrors in different styles add light and interest. **Mirrors**, similar from La Residence Interiors. **Bouji chair**, Made.



*What makes this house a home...*

‘It’s such a special historic property, which is reflected in the integrity of the architecture and many original features’



**Guest bedroom**  
Creams and whites combine with blues and taupes to create a relaxing feel. Bed, similar from Feather & Black.



**Upstairs living room**  
The period windows prompted Anna to turn a bedroom into a living room. Sofa, chair, similar from Made. Ottoman, La Residence Interiors.

## On our doorstep...

**Visit...** 'Arundel Castle (01903 882173, arundelcastle.org). Its rich history and Gothic-style architecture definitely resonate with us. In April and May during the Tulip Festival more than 15,000 tulips are in bloom, making it one of the most impressive displays in the country.'

**Shop at...** 'Lavender House & Garden (01903 885596, lavenderhouseandgarden.co.uk) in Arundel. It's crammed full of flowers, plants, home accessories and must-buy furniture. I enjoyed an Annie Sloan Chalk Paint course there, run by the lovely shop owner Monika Zenikova.'

**Go for a meal at...** 'Pappardelle (01903 882024, pappardelle.co.uk) in Arundel. This is a super restaurant run by an Italian family. The Osteria on the ground floor is more informal with communal tables and a charming rustic feel. The food is excellent and the staff are friendly and welcoming.'

the first floor the higgledy-piggledy layout was reconfigured to free up space for a bedroom, en suite and built-in wardrobe. 'We took out several stud walls since they were not only splitting the area into two small spaces but also obscuring the breathtaking views.'

The biggest challenge was how to work within the listed building constraints to create a large kitchen. 'The house had planning permission for a small extension, which we decided to work with,' says Anna. 'The result is the sleek, bright, practical space we craved.' The original kitchen windows were retained and, once the extension was done, they were reinstalled so that light could flood into the space.

Rendering the characterful red-brick walls in the courtyard was a tough call. 'Although we knew it made sense to brighten that space, we deliberated long and hard,' says Anna. This thoughtful approach at every turn of the renovation is evident throughout the handsome, tranquil home where this hardworking pair can unwind and enjoy spending time with friends and family who come to visit.

'We've had so much pleasure sourcing furniture, soft furnishings and accessories, plus such positive, kind feedback about our home that we decided to launch a website selling elegant home accessories.'

'This project has definitely surpassed our expectations,' says Anna. 'Our builder was fantastic and his attention to detail shines through in every nook and cranny. It's now a wonderful home with an exceptionally high-quality finish that we are extremely proud of.'

**To contact Anna and Julian's online boutique, Please May I Have, call 07811 896033, or visit [pleasemayihave.co.uk](http://pleasemayihave.co.uk).** »

Be inspired by...  
Anna's living room



For more ideas go to [housetohome.co.uk/countryhomesandinteriors](http://housetohome.co.uk/countryhomesandinteriors)

1 Distressed aged **lamp**, H75cm, £179, Cowshed Interiors. 2 Super Shaggy **rug**, 170x120cm, £100, Tesco Direct. 3 **Cushion covers** (from top), Slate Blue tight weave linen; Mid Blue linen, both 51cm sq, £29, Oka Direct. 4 Ruff wooden **bird**, H31cm, £38, Coastal Home. 5 House Additions side **table**, H66x40cm diameter, £90.96, Wayfair. 6 Natural **antler**, 6.5xW33xD12.5cm, £49.50, Nordic House. 7 Horiz Regency Natural Limed **mirror**, H99xW119cm, £310.84, Papa Theo. 8 Bingley **sofa** in Cookie house linen/cotton, H91xW192xD90cm, £1,130, Sofa.com.

Modern  
Country  
Classic



Overmantel mirror

Whether painted or gilded, a beautiful mirror above the fireplace reflects well on your home.

*Need to know...*

Although an overmantel mirror will typically sit on the mantelpiece, it can be hung like a picture if that suits the proportions of the room. Arched tops and rectangular shapes work well. The width of the frame should fit within the pillars supporting the mantelpiece. Allow a height from the mirror top to 5cm below the picture rail, or 15cm below the cornicing.

*Where to buy...*

- **La Maison** for painted French style.
- **Overmantels** for classic reproductions.
- **Joseph McCarthy** for bespoke.

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& INTERIORS

# My Country Business Awards

in association with British Wool

**H**ave you set up a small country business? Or perhaps you have the nugget of a great business idea that you would like to get off the ground? If so, now is your chance to enter the Country Homes & Interiors My Country Business Awards 2015 in association with British Wool.

Six lucky entrepreneurs will win a money-can't-buy package of advice and support from the UK's most talented business advisers and owners.

The My Country Business Awards are celebrating their sixth fantastic year and aim to promote and empower country-based entrepreneurs. Starting up your own business is no mean feat – you need to know how to write a business plan, keep on top of bookkeeping, learn the finer points of marketing your company, ensure your company complies with current legislation, and much more. Finding the right people to provide assistance and mentor you through this process is crucial, so we have teamed up with British Wool plus leading industry business mentors and brands (meet them over the page) to offer six winners invaluable information and advice.





Enter one of  
six categories...

### Interiors

Retail and Services

### Hospitality and Leisure

Craft

Food

British Wool Award  
for **Emerging Talent**  
using British Wool

### The prizes

The 2015 winners will receive an invaluable package of mentoring and promotion in **Country Homes & Interiors**. Starting up your business can often be a daunting experience, but our expert panel of award mentors will guide and support the winners, allowing them to learn new skills and perspectives, while also providing priceless support and insight.

- **Three mentoring sessions** with one of the expert Awards mentors.
- **Coverage** in the My Country Business Awards 2015 winners feature in an autumn 2015 issue of **Country Homes & Interiors**.
- **Country Days blog feature** covering the winners in autumn 2015.

To enter...

Visit **housetohome.co.uk/business** for more details of the competition and an entry form for you to complete and return by the closing date of Wednesday 10 June 2015.



### Why British Wool is supporting My Country Business Awards 2015

British Wool is a renewable and sustainable natural fibre for interior and fashion textiles and it is used by well-known brands all over the world. Over 50,000 sheep farmers in the UK work conscientiously to make this high-quality fibre available and their world is built around a country business that operates from their homes and will often involve the whole family from one generation to the next.

Modern sheep farming is about determination and commitment, matched by the passionate belief of our UK sheep-farming community in the vital role they play in our countryside. At British Wool, we are delighted to sponsor the My Country Business Awards as they clearly embrace the same ethos that has made British Wool the success story it is today.

**TURN THE PAGE TO MEET THE JUDGES AND MENTORS »**



# Category judges and mentors

**Award winners will receive three mentoring sessions with one of our leading industry category partners.**



### Interiors

**Susie Watson, Founder, Susie Watson Designs**

Makers of beautiful handmade pottery, hand-printed fabric and interiors products that can be used every day to brighten up your home, Susie Watson Designs now has seven UK shops.

*Susie Watson  
Designs*



### Food

**Dan Rusga, Marketing Manager, Yeo Valley Farms**

This family-run dairy produces tasty 100% organic products from its award-winning British Friesian cows and from other local organic dairy farm herds.

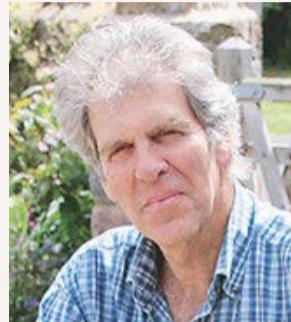


### Retail and Services

**Carmel Allen, Creative Director, Heal's**

Designing, making and selling quality furniture for over two centuries, Heal's has a long history of collaborating with prominent designers and is passionate about discovering future stars.

**HEAL'S**



### Hospitality and Leisure

**Alastair Sawday, Chairman, Alastair Sawday's**

This family-owned travel company with 5,000 places in the UK and Europe hand-picks and inspects every one of its properties.

**Alastair  
Sawday's**



### Craft

**Susannah Bradley, International Community Programs Specialist, Etsy**

An online marketplace for handmade and vintage items, Etsy allows makers around the world to sell unique goods directly to market.

**Etsy**



### British Wool Award for Emerging Talent using British Wool

**Bridgette Kelly, Consultant Interior Textiles Director, Campaign for Wool**

British Wool sells and promotes wool from British breeds on behalf of our national sheep farmers and works closely with the global textile industry.



**TERMS & CONDITIONS** Six winners will receive three mentoring sessions each, plus coverage in a Country Homes & Interiors issue and in a Country Days blog feature, both during autumn 2015. Winners will be selected by the Editor of Country Homes & Interiors and a panel of expert judges. The decision of the judges is final and binding, and no correspondence will be entered into. Winners will be notified by email. Award is as stated, is not transferable and cannot be exchanged for cash. Entry available to UK and ROI residents over the age of 18. Excludes employees of Time Inc. (UK) Ltd, their families, agents or anyone else connected with the competition. Awards close for entries at midnight on Wednesday 10 June 2015. If the winner cannot be contacted and/or is unable to comply with these terms and conditions, the promoter reserves the right to offer the prize to the runner-up selected by the same judges. Failure to respond and/or provide an address and meet the terms of the awards may lead to forfeiture of the prize. The winner agrees to the use of his or her name, photograph and disclosure of country of residence and will co-operate with any other reasonable request by Time Inc. (UK) Ltd, relating to any post-winning publicity. Entry into the awards is deemed acceptance of these terms and conditions. No responsibility can be accepted for entries that are incomplete, damaged, defaced or not received for any reason. The promoter is Time Inc. (UK) Ltd, Blue Fin Building, 110 Southwark Street, London SE1 0SU.



# CLARKE & CLARKE



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# Pops of pattern

Cheer up spring rooms with the latest playful and pared-down prints. Mix soft pastel patterns with muted plains to bring relaxed charm to days at home



*Let linens sing!*  
FRESHEN UP A TABLE WITH CLOTHS,  
TEA TOWELS AND SEAT PADS IN DIFFERENT  
NATURE-INSPIRED PRINTS.  
SEE PAGE 66 FOR DETAILS.



INSTAGRAM

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and behind-the-scenes  
pics from our shoots,  
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[countryhomesmag](https://www.instagram.com/countryhomesmag)



*Pin up a print*

Mount a length of wallpaper  
in a picture frame to act  
as a backdrop to  
beautiful belongings.  
See page 66 for details. »



## Colour up mealtimes

Mix and match tableware and fabric. Canvas cache pots in graphic fabrics hold cutlery and bread, while plates with painted rims and patterned bowls add extra zing. See page 66 for details.



*Plump for  
gorgeous cushions*

Highlight a smartly  
tailored sofa with a row  
of pretty cushions.  
See page 66 for details. »





*Add artistic touches*

Bring character to walls with  
stencilled borders and artwork  
with seasonal country themes.

See page 66 for details.

*Combine patterns and plains*

Complement a patchwork chair with a plain curtain edged in a flower print and a layered cushion in ice cream colours. \*Find out how to make this cushion at [country-days.co.uk](http://country-days.co.uk). See page 66 for details. »

*Make this layered cushion\**



*Step up in style*

Give personality to painted stairs by pasting patterned wallpaper to the risers, and adding a striped runner in similar hues on the floor. See page 66 for details.





### Enjoy sweet dreams

Create a folksy look in a bedroom with jolly patterns on cushions, covers and lampshade, grounded by a painted bed frame and plain pillowcases.

See page 66 for details. >>



# All the details: products and prices

Pages 58-59



### Let linens sing!

**Wall**, painted in Tuffet, from £32.75 for 2.5L Claypaint, Earthborn. (Behind table) Ercol painted **chair**, £145, Home Barn. **Cushion**, Poppy Capello Shell, £90 m, Liberty. Chinwag **chairs**, £250 for 2, Loaf. Seat **pad**, Wild & Free, £48 m, Vanessa Arbuthnott. Ladderback **chair**, from £490, Chalon. **Seat**, Wild & Free, £48 m, Vanessa Arbuthnott. **Table**, from £695, Loaf. (On table) **Tablecloth**, £99.99, LinenMe. **Runner**, Penny Morrison Palermo, £134 m, Redloh House Fabrics. Flower Trellis **plates**, £8.95 each, Dotcomgiftshop. **Biscuit barrel**, £21, Ceramica Blue. Japanese **bowls**, £8.95 each, Dotcomgiftshop. **Jug**, similar from John Lewis. Enno **plates**; **bowls**, all £8 each, Habitat. **Napkins**, £5.49 each, LinenMe. **Cutlery**, £185 for 24 pieces, Ceramica Blue. Deep **bowls**, £7.95 each; **sugar bowl**, £8.95, all Dotcomgiftshop. **Glasses**, £10 for 4, Rose & Grey. **Egg holder**, £10, Tesco Direct. **Tray**, £38, Rowen & Wren. Bronte **plates**, £40 for 4, Dickins & Jones at House of Fraser. (On sill) Deja Ooh **flower pots**, £30 for 3, Not on the High Street. **Jug**,

Pages 60-61



### Colour up mealtimes

Bohemia Dot Dash canvas **pots**, from £20 each, Not on the High Street. **Tea towel**, from a selection, Bluedog & Sought. **Cutlery**, £185 for 24 pieces, Ceramica Blue. Bronte dinner **plates**, £40 for 4, Dickins & Jones at House of Fraser. Small stoneware **plates**, £8.95 each; small **bowls**, £3.95 each; **sugar bowl**, £8.95; deep **bowl**, £7.95, all Dotcomgiftshop. Grey Enno dinner **plates**, £8 each, Habitat. **Cushion**, Poppy Capello Shell, £90 m, Liberty.

### Plump for gorgeous cushions

**Walls**, painted in Humpty Dumpty, £32.75 for 2.5L Claypaint, Earthborn. Large Venice **sofa** in Monsoon Home Chiante Sky, £1,139, Multiyork. **Cushions** (from left): **1** Needful, £45, Loaf. **2** Wood Fairy Floral Clay, £85 m, Liberty. **3** Asolo, col Straw, £85 m, Romo. **4** Bird, £30, Dickins & Jones at House of Fraser. **5** Penny

Pages 62-63



### Add artistic touches

**Wall**, painted in Tuffet, £32.75 for 2.5L Claypaint, Earthborn. Border created using Aviary Garden **paint roller**, £30, Laura Ashley. Roses at 5 past Nine Dieppe by Chloe Cheese signed limited edition **print**, £165, St Jude's Prints. Millie small **hall table** with 2 drawers, £259, Barker & Stonehouse. Hanging **heart**, similar from Not on the High Street. Glass **vase**, similar from LSA International.

Pages 64-65



### Step up in style

**Wallpaper** (on stair risers, from top): **1** Fretwork, col Aqua/Lime, £39 a roll, Sanderson. **2** Rose Capello Shell, £80 a roll, Liberty. **3** Fretwork, as before. **4** Rose Capello Shell, as before. Stick back side **chair**, £600, Chalon. **Cushion** (from left) Finola knit braid, col Camellia, £15 m; Asolo, col Straw, £85 m, both Romo. Wood Fairy Floral Clay, £85 m, Liberty. Asolo, col Phlox, £85 m; Finola knit braid, col Mulberry, £15 m, both Romo. Vintage **stool**, from a selection, The Old Pill Factory. **Accessories**, from a selection, Bluedog & Sought. *Living in the Dolls House* by Chloe Cheese signed limited edition **print**, £95, St Jude's Prints. Rustic reclaimed wood **frame**, from £35, Rose & Grey. Chatham flatweave 100% wool **runner**, W70cm, col Mallow, £118 linear m, Roger Oates.

£35, Home Barn. **Blinds**, Asolo, col Solent, £85 m, Romo. **Ties**, Fretwork, £30 m, Sanderson Home. **Peg rail**; red **tea towel**; **heart**, all from a selection, Bluedog & Sought. Wooden **bird**, £40 for 3, Cox & Cox. **Tea towel**, £12 for 2, Dickins & Jones at House of Fraser. **Rug**, £195, Loaf. Other items, stylist's own.

### Pin up a print

**Wall**, painted in Tuffet, from £32.75 for 2.5L Claypaint, Earthborn. (On board) **Wallpaper**, Leaf Capello Shell, £80 a roll, Liberty. **Cards**, from £2.60 each, Linen Prints. Pom-Pom **trim**, £55 m; Riya **braid**, £27 m, Romo. Chloe Cheese **print**, £95, St Jude's Prints. **Birds**, £40 for 3, Cox & Cox. Antique **counter**, £795, Home Barn. Cody **lamp**, £95, Dickins & Jones at House of Fraser. **Jug**, £15; Stefan **vase**, £25, both Habitat. **Tins**, from £20 for 3, Ceramica Blue. Naples **vase**, £22, Habitat. **Bowls**, from £7.95 each, Dotcomgiftshop. **Spoons**, similar from Debenhams. Other items, stylist's own.

Morrison Sukriti, £143.30 m, Redloh House Fabrics; Pom-Pom trim, £55 m, Romo. Heart **stools**, £55 for 2, Cox & Cox. Barcelona **cup**, £8.95, Dotcomgiftshop. Packington **side table**, £225, John Lewis. **Vase**, £44 for 3 assorted, Littlewoods. Cody **lamp**, £95, Dickins & Jones at House of Fraser. Glenmore **rocking chair**, £699, John Lewis. Layered **cushion**, Asolo, cols Solent, Soft Pink, Straw, £85 m, Romo. Zinc-lined willow **log basket**, £82, Rowen & Wren. Raggie **rug**, £145, Loaf. Ramsons and **Campion** by Angie Lewin signed limited edition **print**, £335, St Jude's Prints. **Frame**, from £2.75, Ikea. (On mantelpiece) Large Moorish milk **jug**, £15.95, Dotcomgiftshop. Vintage **cotton reels**, £12 each, Home Barn. **Wallpaper**, Leaf Capello Shell, £80 a roll, Liberty. (On shelves) Pink **basket**, from a selection, Bluedog & Sought. **Vases**, £44 for 3 assorted, Littlewoods. Butterfly Home by Matthew Williamson Peacock metal **trunk**, £65, Debenhams. Other items, stylist's own.

### Combine patterns and plains

Bespoke **chair** covered in (frill) Calista, col Blue Multi, £41.25 m; (sides) Chiante, col Blush, £26.25 m; (arms) Jude, col Gold, £41.25 m, all Monsoon Home Collection at Multiyork. Layered **cushion**, Asolo, cols Solent, Soft Pink, Straw, £85 m, Romo. Sandie **side table**, £225, Loaf. **Curtain**, Asolo, col Phlox, £85 m, Romo; border, Wood Fairy Floral Clay, £85 m, Liberty. (On table) Vintage white **pitcher**; small glazed **jug**; hurricane **lantern**; blue **basket**, all from a selection, Bluedog & Sought. Handmade cream wool **rug**, £275, Cox & Cox. Other items, stylist's own.

### Enjoy sweet dreams

**Wall**, painted in Tuffet, from £32.75 for 2.5L Claypaint, Earthborn. Double French Sleigh **bed**, col Malmo Blue, from £1,559, Scumble Goosie. Stone washed linen kingsize **flat sheet**, col Natural, £119.99; matching **pillowcases**, £19.99 each, all LinenMe. Summertime **pillowcases**, £30 for 2, Dickins & Jones at House of Fraser. Blue **cushions**, similar from Fable. Bird on Branch **cushion**, £29.50, Not on the High Street. May Blossom **duvet cover** £80, Dickins & Jones at House of Fraser. Embroidered **throw**, Wightwick, £115 m, Sanderson. Bellamy **throw**, £395, Fable. Patchwork **collage** by Michelle Thompson, £650, Not on the High Street. Elgin spindle leg **table**, £75, Laura Ashley. Painted in Humpty Dumpty, £32.75 for 2.5L Claypaint, Earthborn. **Vase**, £12.50, Cox & Cox. Buttons & Moon Birdhouse **lampshade**, £34, Not on the High Street. Vintage Bobbin **lamp base**, from a selection, The Old Pill Factory.

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# Good to grow

HEAD TO THE SHED AND POTTER WITH THIS ROUND-UP OF GREEN-FINGERED GARDEN BUYS

*Everything you need for potting up plants*

**A potting bench is an essential, providing all the space and storage you need to keep up with the growing season. Go for a stylish design in solid oak - the galvanised metal top and shelf make it a practical choice that will age beautifully.**

Heritage Traders oak **potting bench**, £302, World Stores. (Top shelf) Chamonix glass **bottle**, £29.95, Parlane International. Aged **pot**, £6.99, The Chelsea Gardener. Antiqued **pots**, from a selection, Grand Illusions. Ceramic Oly **planter**, £10, by Sainsbury's. Orange **atomiser**, £5.99, The Chelsea Gardener. Polka Dot **radio**, £79.95, Emma Bridgewater. Zinc **pots**, £11.95 for 3 (with willow panel), Grand Illusions. (On table top) antiqued **pots**, from a selection, Grand Illusions. Versailles **urn**, £24, An Angel at my Table. Aged **pot**, £3.99, The Chelsea Gardener. Terracotta **pots**, from 59p each, Homebase. Sophie Conran **Gardener's Journal**, £14.95; cell tray **trowel**, £8.95 for 2 assorted, both Burgen & Ball. Summer Garden **pen**, £4.99, Santoro. Toadstool **mug**, £13.99, Hannah Turner Ceramics. Seedlings **tray**, £10, Garden Trading. Antiqued **pot**, from a selection, Grand Illusions. Bird **string dispenser** with scissors, £19, Dibor. Jute **sack**, £4 for 2, Tesco Direct. Personalised **crate**, £39, Plantabox at Not on the High Street. Other items, stylist's own.



**VIDEO**

For more great shopping ideas,  
go to  
[country-days.co.uk](http://country-days.co.uk)



**1 Make a note of gardening activities,** Gardening Journal, £6, Tesco Direct.

**2 Keep a record of planting dates and helpful tips,** The Thoughtful Gardener Garden Journal, £14.95, Wild & Wolf.

**3 Plant at the perfect depth,** wooden dibber, £5, Sainsbury's.

**4 Be inspired by seasonal produce,** Kitchen Season calendar, £13.95, Studio Scrase.

**5 Help bees and butterflies with a wildflower seed mixture - simply soak and throw this month for a display this year (or sow between August and October for flowers next year),** Butterfly Seed Bomb, £3.50, Ella James.

**6 Spruce up old pots for new plantings,** pot brush, £5.50, Hibbett of Oswestry.

**7 Snack on the go with a thermal flask - the insulated lid doubles as a bowl for soups or stews,** Stanley Classic food flask, £34, Labour and Wait.

**8 Harvest herbs with precision,** mini snips, £4.95, Burgon & Ball.

**9 Get ideas for your dream garden,**

*Garden Design: A Book of Ideas* by Heidi Howcroft & Marianne Majerus, £30, Octopus Publishing.

**10 Add sifted soil to seed trays with a perfectly sized sieve,** wooden potting sieve, £22, Hibbett of Oswestry.

**11 Make identifying your seedlings a breeze,** giant wooden plant labels, £2.49 each, Burgon & Ball.

**12 Show off your love of gardening with a heart-shaped tool,** Sneeboer heart-shaped trowel, £39.95, Sarah Raven.

**13 Choose a pretty flower pot,** Love to Grow pot, £9.95, Parlance International.

**14 Fill your garden room with love,** wooden decorative heart, £39.99 for 6, Sugarboo Designs at Luma.

**15 Create statement flower beds with proud little signs,** 'Grown in the UK' slate tags, £8.50 for 2, Garden Trading.

**16 Guarantee straight lines when sowing seeds,** planting line, £10.95, Burgon & Ball.

**17 Collect, store and date individual packets of seeds from your garden**

**for future years,** seed storage envelopes, £3.95 for 12, Burgon & Ball.

**18 Protect your green fingers,** ladies' floral cotton gloves, £2.50, Tesco Direct.

**19 Prune and preen with this vibrant pocket-sized wonder,** mini secateurs, £20.95 for 2 assorted, Sarah Raven.

**20 Make your own paper pots for seedlings,** pot maker, £5, by Sainsbury's.

**21 Enjoy a brew in a beautifully illustrated cup,** Toadstool mug, £13.99, Hannah Turner Ceramics.

**22 Share how happy gardening makes you,** Smile postcard, £1, Paperchase.

**23 Dig deep with an oversized dibber,** dibber, £13.99, The Chelsea Gardener.

**24 Take the guesswork out of seed sowing with a handy spacer,** planting ruler, £8.95, Burgon & Ball.

**25 Save your back when planting bulbs,** Sneeboer Traditional Bulb Planter, £79.95, Sarah Raven.

(Background) Sisal Linen Gold rug, £385.70, Crucial Trading. Wrapping paper, from £1.50 a sheet, Paperchase. »

# Store and display gardening essentials



A wall unit with apple crate styling looks lovely against an exposed brick wall and is a clever way to store your gardening bits and bobs. The homespun shelving has room for everything from seed packets and plant labels to gardening gloves and secateurs, with the open design making it easy to grab what you need as you head out into the garden.

Colworth Shed storage unit, £55, Garden Trading. (From top) orange secateurs, £20, Labour and Wait. Wooden heart, £39.99 for 6, Sugarboo Designs at Luma. Myrtle screen print, £20, Mimosa Street. Twine in a jar with scissors, £6, Tesco Direct. Let it Grow postcard, from a selection, Paperchase. Tools, £4 each, Sainsbury's. Gardener's Tea Break mug, £12 (sold with hand cream, hand wash and nail brush, as seen on shelf below), Heathcote & Ivory. Hand tools in mug, from a selection, Burgen & Ball. Twooo twines, £3.65 each, Potter & Rest. Green twine, £4 for 3, Nutscene. Pruning scissors, £14, Labour and Wait. Ribbon trio, £5, Jane Means. Butterfly container, £8, Berry Red. Seeds box, col Thyme, £10, Garden Trading. Floral notebook, £7.50, Caroline Gardner. Seed packets, from a selection, Sarah Raven. Heart string dispenser, £12, Dibor. Wheelbarrow card with seeds, £4.75, Seedlings Cards & Gifts. Chair, similar from The Worm That Turned. Grid Print cagoule, £45, Next. Fork; spade, £15 each, Sainsbury's.



**1** Store seed packets and bulbs neatly in a **stylish container**, Bulb and Seeds box, col Thyme, £20, Garden Trading.

**2** Hang your tools so they are always easy to find, Wooden Rake hooks, £22.50, Parlance International.

**3** Take notes with personalised stationery, bespoke correspondence card, £1.63, Honey Tree.

**4** Fit playful hooks to hang aprons and kneelers, Tap hooks, £6 each, Ella James.

**5** Pick traditional tools for garden tasks, cast-iron scissors, £19 (sold with dispenser and twine), Dibor.

**6 & 11** Give support to seedlings and climbers, plant support rings, £2.95 for 24, Burgon & Ball.

**7** Add a touch of fun to tools with pretty

coloured handles, The Thoughtful Gardener fork and trowel set, £29.95, Wild & Wolf.

**8** Stock up on garden essentials, hessian sacks, £4 for 2, Hen & Hammock.

**9** Keep things neat and tidy with rustic metal storage, Copper Collections box, £26.95, Design Vintage. (In box) Twool garden twine, £3.65, Potter & Rest. Wooden plant markers, £2.99 for 25, The Chelsea Gardener. Copper tees, £4.95 for 10, Burgon & Ball.

**10** Pack up and head to the allotment, Allotment Box, £10, Sainsbury's.

**12** Pretty up your workbench with floral storage, Floral Book boxes, £18 for 3 assorted, Next.

**13** Nourish post-gardening hands with

a rich blend of shea butter, essential oils and vitamin E, Gardener's Hand Cream, £5, Heathcote & Ivory.

**14** Choose stylish storage hooks, Garden hooks sign, £4, Tesco Direct.

**15** Carry a pocket-sized notebook to jot down notes and sketches, Sophie Conran Gardener's Notebook with plain and lined pages, £5.95, Burgon & Ball.

**16** Fill hessian baskets with bits and bobs to avoid a cluttered space, storage basket, £14 for 3 assorted, Tesco Direct. (In basket) Sweet Pea Heirloom Mix't Prop It 'n' Crop It kit, £5, Potter & Rest.

**17** Tell the world how you feel, Love My Garden sign, £4.95, Parlance International. (Background) Sisal Linen Gold rug and wrapping paper, as before. »

# Show off blooms in planters and baskets

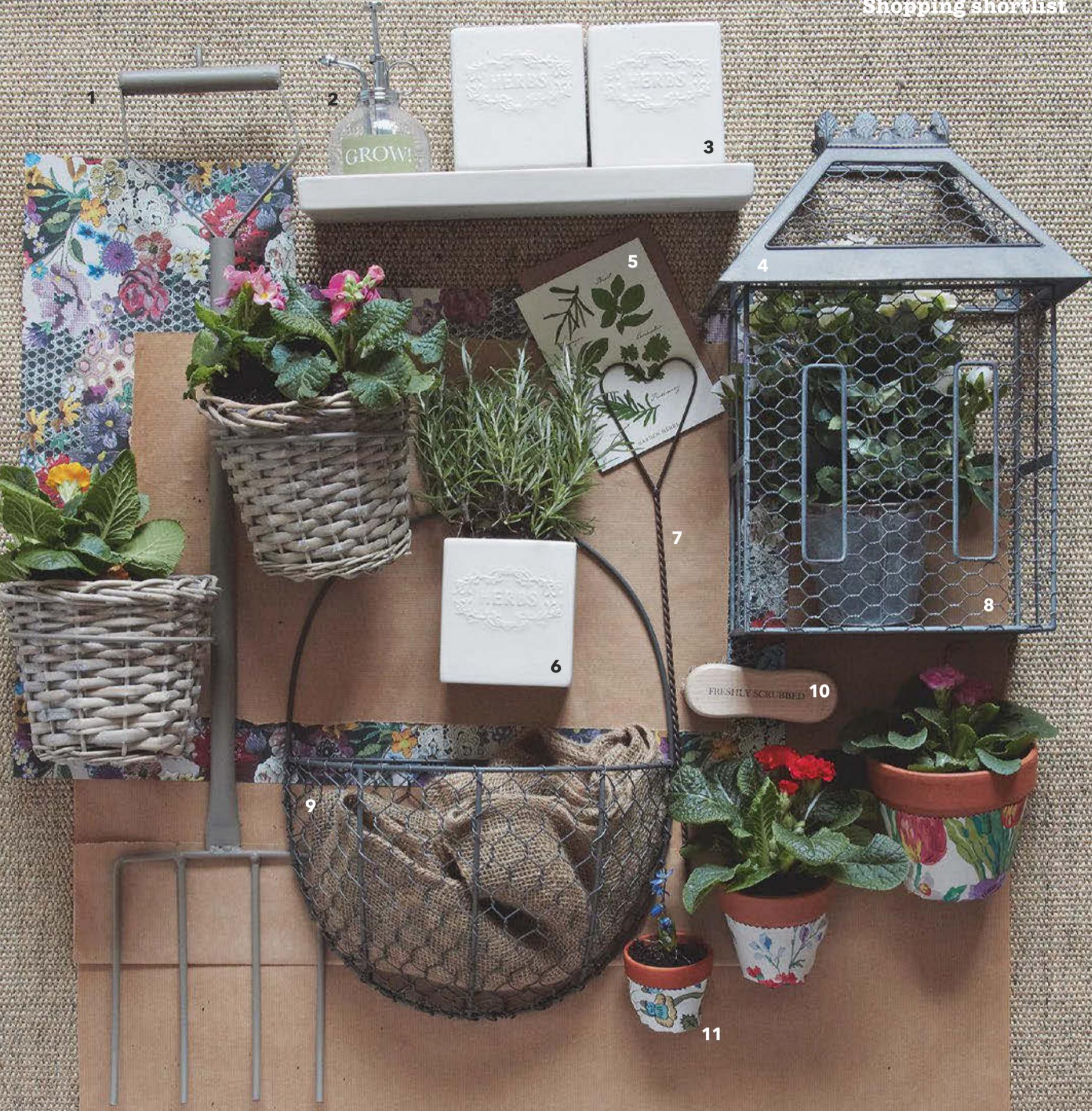
Enjoy the fruits of your gardening labour with a gorgeous display of seasonal flowers in decorative stands, pots and terrariums.

**Birdcage** stand, £85, An Angel at my Table. Handpainted **hurricane lamp**, £14, Berry Red. Antiqued **pots**, from a selection, Grand Illusions. Blue herb **pot**, £10 (for 4 with carrier), Sainsbury's. String **cone**, £11.05; **olive tree**, £11.40; zinc **pot**, £11.95 for 3 (with willow panel), all Grand Illusions. Mini glasshouse plant **terrarium**, £40, Ella James. Herb **pots**, col Clay, £35 for 6 (with tray), Garden Trading. Aged Dakota **bottle**, £49.50, Parlance International. Ceramic Oly **planter**, £16, by Sainsbury's. Jade **vase**, £24.95, Sarah Raven. Seeds of Love art **print**, £16.50, Studio Scrase. Recycled wood **frame**, £94.50, Luma. Architects storage **unit**, £550, Garden Trading.

**Wrapping paper** (around pot), from a selection, Paperchase.

Other items, stylist's own.





**1** Display colourful blooms in a quirky wall-mounted planter, Garden Fork planter, £22, Ella James.

**2** Encourage young plants to grow with a daily spritz from a stylish glass bottle, 'Grow' water mister, col Gooseberry, £10, Garden Trading.

**3 & 6** Grow culinary herbs in embossed stoneware jars, Trio of herb pots with tray, £32, Laura Ashley.

**4** Create a wow look by giving your favourite plant its very own home, plant house, £10, Tesco Direct.

**5** Send greetings with garden-inspired

postcards, Garden Herbs card, £3.50, The Potting Shed collection, Studio Scrase.

**7** Use a rustic heart holder to keep track of recent plantings or display pretty gardening mementos, Heart label holder, £4.50 each, Grand Illusions.

**8** Enjoy an everlasting display with a convincing faux plant, potted rose, £11.50, Grand Illusions.

**9** Brighten up a wall with a basket of trailing plants, Dewey wall basket, £48 for 2 assorted, Rowen & Wren. Natural jute sack, £4 for 2, Tesco Direct.

**10** Give your harvested vegetables

a good clean before popping them in the pot, Freshly Scrubbed vegetable brush, £2.50, Garden Trading.

**11** Jazz up plain pots with the latest country floral fabrics, a simple way to create a bespoke look, terracotta pots, from 59p each, Homebase. Fabrics (from left): Sita Jade, col Jade/Colbalt, £47 m; Sweet Williams, col Jade/Red, £56 m; Salad Days, col Emerald/Multi, £47 m, all Sanderson. (Background) Sisal Linen Gold rug and wrapping paper, as before. With thanks to Matthew's Plants and Posh Flowers for supplying the plants.

# Be inspired by birds

SET YOUR SIGHTS ON OUR FEATHERED FRIENDS  
AND CREATE SEASONAL CRAFTS

1. Decorate boxes  
with découpage

Style idea

Why not blend in other craft treatments  
such as bird stamps or stencils?

2.

Create a wall  
of birds

Style idea

\* Choose tonal coloured  
papers and change them  
according to seasons for  
an on-trend look. »

3.  
Fashion  
stylish plant  
supports



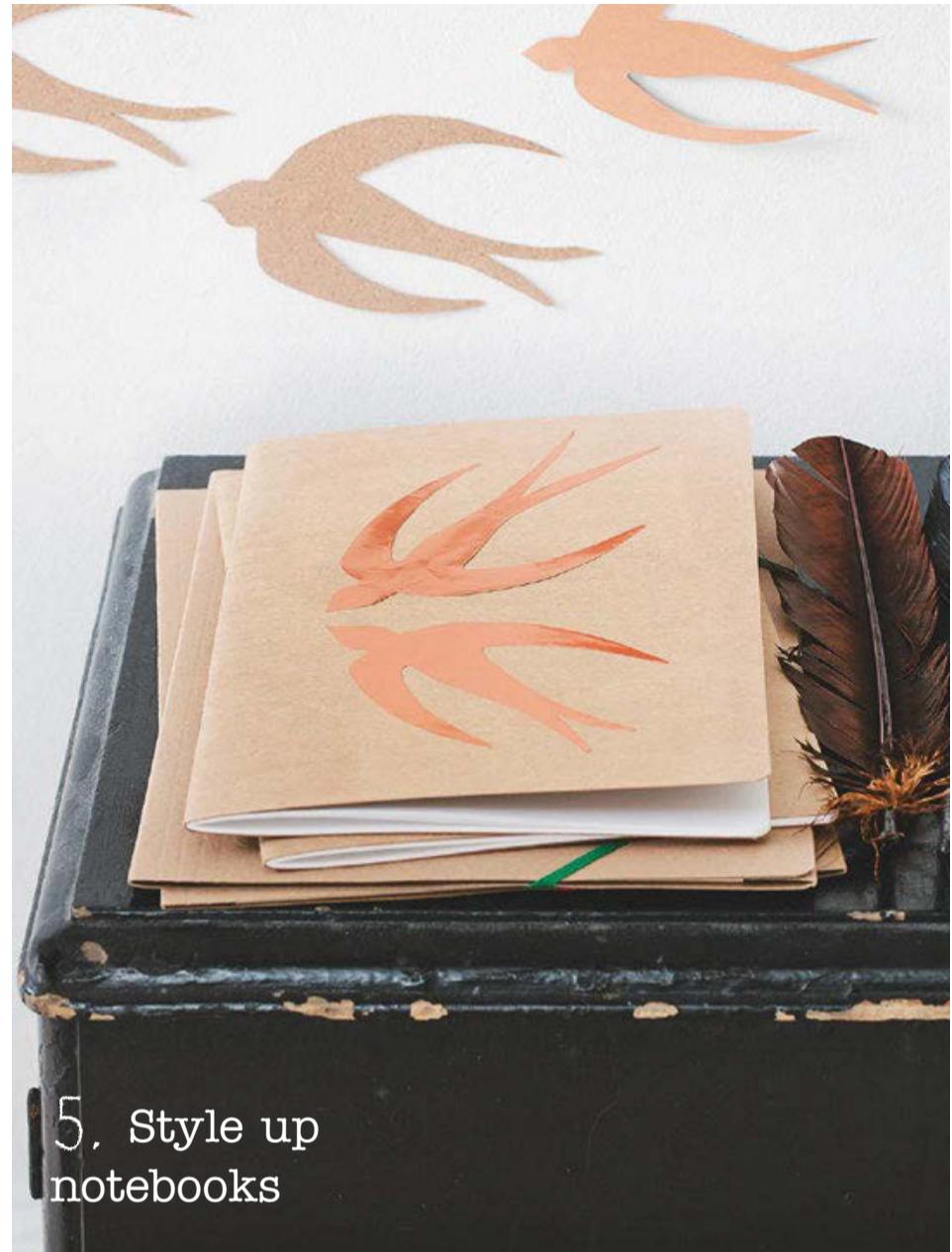
Style idea

Add a splash of colour  
to the paper bird and  
paint simple details such  
as beak or wing details.





#### 4. Frame your own pictures



#### 5. Style up notebooks

## Look to the skies



Over the next few weeks many of our favourite birds will be returning to British skies. Be inspired by their aerobatic displays, and watch as they proudly preen and feather their nests.

\* **Take your camera** outside and photograph birds as they soar and swoop. Your images will reveal fantastic shapes and patterns which you can use as a craft starting point.

\* **Try studying and sketching birds** to harness their unique characters and shapes as they fly, feed, nest and nurture. Use watercolours, pastels and pencils for quick ways to capture

and illustrate their changing behaviour.

\* **Use the colouring** of a bird as a palette for your craft story. From bright to smudgy, their feathers feature all manner of tones to suit a country scheme.

\* **Collect bird images** that can be used for crafting. Gift wrap, cards and magazines are all good sources, or try tiles, cookie cutters, buttons and badges. »

#### 6. Make a dancing mobile



# How to make it...

### 1 Decorate boxes with découpage

Cut out and keep images of your favourite feathered friends and paste onto boxes for a country storage solution. Taking clean and dust-free boxes, paste the back of the cut-out bird with a multipurpose découpage sealer, glue and finish. Place on the box and lightly smooth over with a brush or piece of foam to remove air bubbles and excess glue. Repeat with the other cut-outs, then finish off with a final coat of the sealer.

*\*Tip Try using monochrome images on the boxes to achieve a more graphic, sophisticated look.*



Mod Podge all-in-one sealer, glue and finish, £4, Hobbycraft. Other items, all similar from: Birds paper, The Craft Corner. Clipboard, Chalkboards UK. Boxes, The Bag N Box Man. Bird, The Vintage Swallow. Tray, Amara.

### 4 Frame your own pictures

Place pretty birds in re-purposed frames. Layer up images, artwork and book covers onto paper or the wall, and fix with a non-staining tack adhesive such as UHU White Tack. Add origami paper birds, made by cutting out the body and wing shape from paper (see Openclipart for shape ideas). Glue together with paper glue – we like Copydex. Once you're happy with your placement, remove the frame back, position the frame over the image and hang on the wall with a white-painted nail.

*\*Tip Add texture by including toy or model birds.*



Copydex, £4.99 for 125ml, Homebase. Other items, all similar from: Vintage bird cards and posters, Ebay and Etsy. Origami paper, Paperchase. Frames, Ikea. Bird shape, Hobbycraft.

### 2 Create a wall of birds

Put up a favourite species in flight using paper bird profiles created on craft or handmade paper. Draw, trace and cut out shapes of birds such as swifts and swallows. Use your own sketches as inspiration or download free-to-copy illustrations from websites such as Openclipart. For a permanent display, paste the shapes to the wall with diluted wallpaper paste, or for a temporary feature use a non-staining tack adhesive such as UHU White Tack.

*\*Tip To produce a 3D effect, just glue the middle of the birds to the wall and watch them flutter and create shadows.*



Items, all similar from: Bird shapes, Openclipart. Paper, Paperchase. Chair, Ercol. Lamp, Ikea. Stationery, Muji.

### 5 Style up notebooks

Give plain writing pads and notebooks a personalised feel with lovely touches of bird imagery. Cut out paper bird shapes, as before, from free-to-download online sources like Openclipart, in craft or handmade paper. Paste the backs of the birds with paper glue, such as PVA, and stick the shapes to the front of the book, smoothing any air bubbles with a brush, then leave to dry. Why not make a few books and tie with ribbon as a thoughtful gift idea?

*\*Tip Use handmade paper to give a more textural element to the notebook cover.*



Notebooks, £1.75 each, Muji. PVA glue, £1.50 for 300ml, Hobbycraft. Other items, all similar from: Shapes, Openclipart. Paper, Paperchase. Feather, Hobbycraft.

### 3 Fashion stylish plant supports

Lavish plants with TLC by creating a plant support with a bird topper made from musical manuscripts. Download bird images from free online sources, as before, or sketch your own. Draw, trace and cut out a bird shape on a music score. Paint a short piece of dowelling rod with two coats of white eggshell paint. Glue the middle of the bird (as shown) to the rod with a general-purpose craft glue and allow to dry.

*\*Tip For a sturdier bird, paste the music paper onto both sides of thick card before tracing and cutting.*



Vintage sheet music printed paper, £3, Etsy. Other items, all similar from: Bird shapes, Openclipart. Wooden dowels, Wickes. Bird cage decoration, Not on the High Street. Bird ornament, Skandium.

### 6 Make a dancing mobile

This will cheer up a quiet corner. Make paper birds by drawing and cutting out a shape from craft paper. Paint a face if you like. Take another piece of paper the same length as the bird and concertina fold narrowly lengthways. Make a small slit in the middle of the bird with a craft knife and push the folded paper through until equal on both sides. Fan out to make wings. (You could also cut a wing from paper and stick it on.) Hang from a branch with clear thread or fix with a loop of jewellery wire through

the bird.

*\*Tip Secure clear thread near the neck of the bird so it's balanced.*

Paper, Paperchase. Wire, Hobbycraft.





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*“I like nothing more than pulling on my wellies and going for a country walk”*

*Homewares designer Ashley Thomas*

**A**fter studying art and design at college, Ashley Thomas launched her own brand of home accessories from her attic in 2008. She now has a successful design collaboration with Debenhams, called At Home with Ashley Thomas, and her own range is stocked in interiors shops across the UK. Handmade cushions, quirky tea towels, cards and limited-edition art prints and wallpapers featuring seaside nostalgia, playful cats and dogs, and vintage florals are all digitally designed and made in England.

Never without her sketchbook, Ashley has drawn pets, flowers and landscapes since childhood, and her inspiration often comes from the smallest detail: the pattern on a vintage plate or birds in her garden. We went to the Peak District to meet her...

**What do you love most about where you live?** I live in an old Victorian house with my husband and our curly-haired cat, Rex. (I'm a firm believer that no home should be without a pet.) I grew up in London, but have lived in Derbyshire for 12 years in a small market town on the edge of the Peak District. I love being so close to the countryside, as I can be on top of a hill in minutes. I also live near some fantastic locations, such as Chatsworth, but have fast links to London, so it really is the best of both worlds.

**Sum up your perfect country home.**

An old stone-built farmhouse with a huge kitchen and spectacular views of rolling



hills. Our garden would be full of foxgloves with chickens scratching around, and in it there would be a summerhouse that I could use as a design studio. Inside, there would be vases filled with freshly gathered peonies – my favourite flower.

**What inspires you most about living in the country?** Pulling on a pair of wellies and going for a long country walk. Fresh air has a magical effect and clears the head. It helps put everything in perspective. I moved into my new studio on the Welbeck Estate in Sherwood Forest last summer. It's a »





Flowers from  
Ashley's garden  
scent her home  
in summer.



A project  
takes shape  
in the studio.



Who could resist  
the Scottie cushion  
for Debenhams?



Ashley's watering  
hole of choice.



Ashley's  
creations line  
her kitchen.



FOX HOUSE



Bryony bedlinen and  
cushions from the new  
At Home with Ashley  
Thomas collection.



## My kind of country

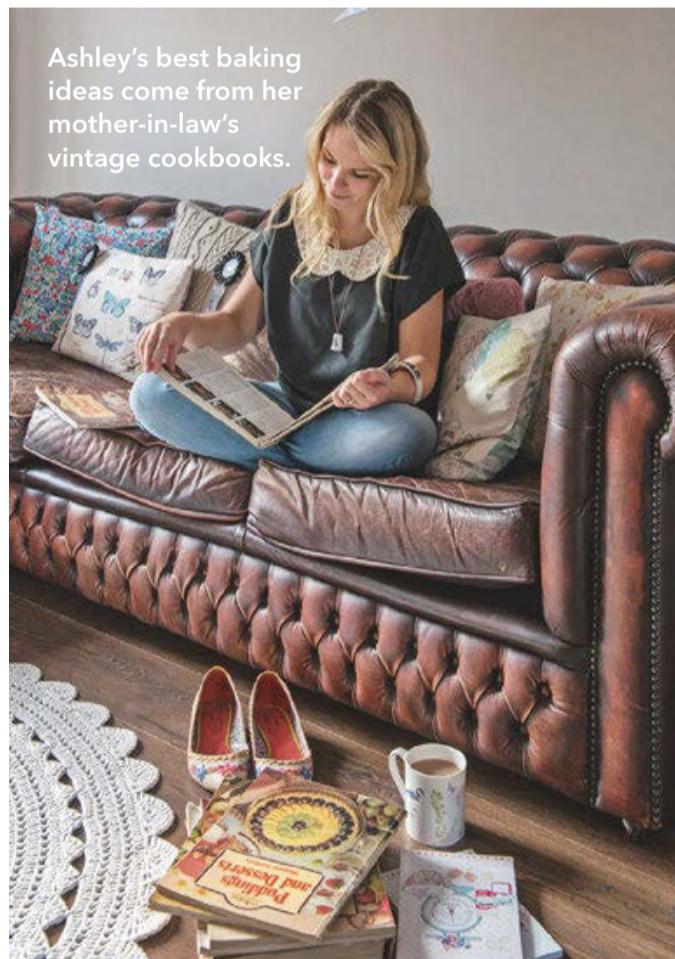
wonderfully creative and inspiring place, which I feel privileged to be part of.

**What is your earliest memory of being in the countryside?** I loved making mud pies with my sister and building straw-bale assault courses in the barn and DIY tree swings. We grew up in a country estate near London, so there was always lots to do.

**Do you have any hobbies?** I bake and cook, even though my kitchen is tiny. It's a lovely way to spend a Sunday afternoon. Family and friends enjoy my creations – that's the best part. My favourite cake is a Victoria sponge. I get ideas from food blogs and my mother-in-law's amazing collection of vintage cook books.

**Your favourite local pub?** The Fox House at Longshaw is surrounded by spectacular scenery and great walks along Burbage Edge. If you're really lucky, you'll see herds of deer out on the moors.

**Describe your perfect weekend...** On Friday I wind down with friends after work in the pub. Saturday starts with a lie-in, then it's off to Sherwood Forest for a session on the Segways, followed by a picnic and a film in



*“I couldn't live without...  
My bed, my sketchbook  
and cups of tea”*

the evening with my husband, Phil. Sunday usually starts with an early-morning car-boot sale (I'm obsessed!), hunting for antiques and unusual finds, then afternoon tea with friends. The weekend ends with a Sunday roast at home with all the family.

**Where do you like to shop locally?** The award-winning Welbeck Farm Shop is just a stone's throw from my studio so I'll often pop in there for lunch. It's also full of delicious local produce.

**What is your favourite seasonal food and how do you cook it?** Rhubarb – when my rhubarb plants start to shoot I know that spring has arrived. I have an amazing patch and we harvest it three times a year. I've made everything from rhubarb and chilli chutney to rhubarb ice cream.

**Tell us about your favourite items in the new collection?** I love the Scottie cushion and vintage handkerchief design bedding, Bryony, at Debenhams.  
**Visit [ashleythomasdesign.co.uk](http://ashleythomasdesign.co.uk).**  
**Also see Ashley's range at Debenhams, illustrated with retro shop fronts and tearooms from the great British high street.**

**ABOVE** The Welbeck Farm Shop keeps Ashley in fresh cheese and produce. Her own garden is a source of rhubarb, which she loves to use in homemade ice cream.

# Love Scandinavian style

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1 Betty Jackson. Black cushion, £32. 2 Clip-top glass bottle, £5. 3 RJR. John Rocha teapot, £37.50; sugar pot, £16. 4 RJR. John Rocha placemat, £12 for 2. 5 Vases, £15 for 3.

Scandinavian style, a classic look for modern country living, is one of the key trends this season at Debenhams. Artisan in origin, this relaxed style combines texture, organic shapes and translucent lustres for a pared-back look that's simple to achieve.

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# — Projects, plans — & dreams

All the solutions, advice and inspiration you'll ever need for the perfect country home



PROJECT

1

Add a glass extension to your home

PROJECT

2

Choose clever bathroom storage

PROJECT

3

Discover the latest range cookers

**Oak garden room,**  
£52,000, Arboreta. 

# PROJECT 1

## GLASS ROOMS

**G**lass rooms are a sure way to add space with a sparkle to a country home, whether they're used for lounging, dining or simply enjoying the view.

These days, many of us will opt for the flexible space of an extension that's open to the rest of the house, rather than closed off by a door. The contemporary glass box style works extremely well on period properties, since its minimal design does not detract from the original building. Oak-framed rooms are also popular, creating a modern but authentic addition to an existing home.

As an alternative, classic conservatory designs maximise the use of glazing for both walls and roof, yet not at the expense of the character of a period home. 'A bespoke conservatory can keep the stylistic design appropriate to the house and it also allows for matching the details exactly,' says Richard Ross-Harper, Senior Designer, Marston & Langinger. For a grander look, opt for a traditional orangery, its roof supported by brick-built pillars and illuminated from above by a light-filled lantern.

Above all, use recommended architects, specialist builders or a conservatory company, whose expertise will prove invaluable.

### Seamless addition

'Our plan for this green-oak frame garden room was not to copy the house exactly, but to use the same palette of vernacular, natural materials and proportions,' says Ben Albright, Sales Manager, Border Oak. 'Handmade clay tiles and bricks complement the house and large areas of glass give a contemporary feel, allowing light to flood in.'

### Which style of glass extension will suit my home?

**Garden room, similar (excluding connection to the house), from £42,000, Border Oak.**



1

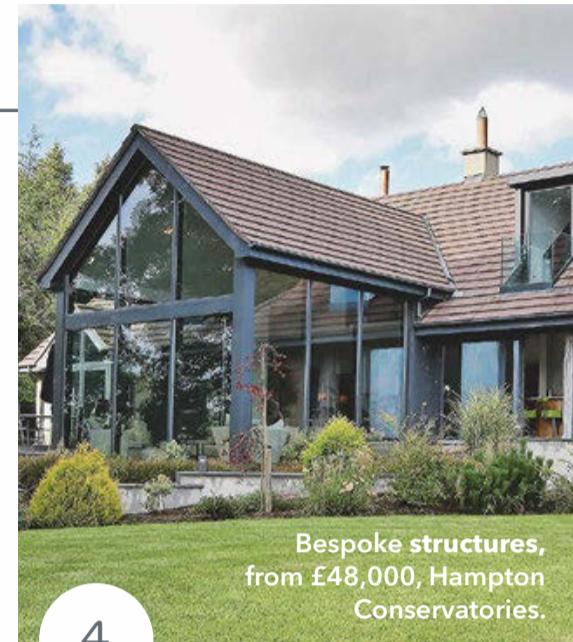
Tip

Ventilation and shading are key to your comfort, so consider automated roof lights and blinds.



2

**Oak framed garden room, £96,000, Prime Oak.**



**Bespoke structures, from £48,000, Hampton Conservatories.**

4

### Aiming higher

'A double-height extension maximises a feeling of light and space and allows views and access from both levels,' says Mervyn Montgomery, Managing Director, Hampton Conservatories. 'The open gallery also allows light and solar gain from the south elevation to reach spaces on the northern side.' »



3

**Painted sapele orangery, £60,000, Malbrook.**

### Light-filled lantern

'The key design issue for an orangery roof lantern is proportion,' says Jeremy Preston-Jones, Design Department Head, Malbrook. 'It is vital that the glass roof is pitched at the correct angle – too steep and the room loses cosiness; too flat and it has no wow factor. This lantern has a 25cm-deep upstand, helping to join the view of sky and garden.'

# What are the latest looks for country conservatories?

## Classic twist

'This new light-filled kitchen/dining conservatory is the hub of the home,' says Jane Hindmarch, Marketing Manager, Vale Garden Houses. 'The structure has traditional elements such as pilasters and lead detailing to the gable end, but also incorporates bi-folding doors for a modern feel.'

## Country finish

'We finished this oak orangery with tung oil, which brings out the grain,' says Alex Cole, Sales Director, David Salisbury. 'The seasoned oak beams and engineered oak doors and windows will age to a beautiful silvery finish to complement the stonework of the house. Black forgework handles complete the look.'

**Painted hardwood conservatory, £35,000, Room Outside.**



7

5

**Painted timber conservatory, colour Tempest, from £35,000, Vale Garden Houses.**



6

**Rustic oak orangery, £105,000, David Salisbury.**



*Tip*

Hardwood is the default option for a country conservatory, but don't overlook aluminium, which is maintenance free.

## Clean lines

'Planners tend to prefer a simple approach on an older or listed building,' says Michael Bradley, Group Managing Director, Room Outside. 'Here, a single-slope roof produces the maximum amount of natural light, even on a north-facing aspect, and allows a straightforward abutment to the house.'



### Country best Conservatory floors



**Wood effect**  
Low-maintenance porcelain tiles.

• **Boardwalk Maple tiles, from £90 sq m, Stone & Ceramic Warehouse.**



**Classic stone**  
Flagstones with a distressed look.

• **Pierre du Mont limestone, £198 sq m, Paris Ceramics.**

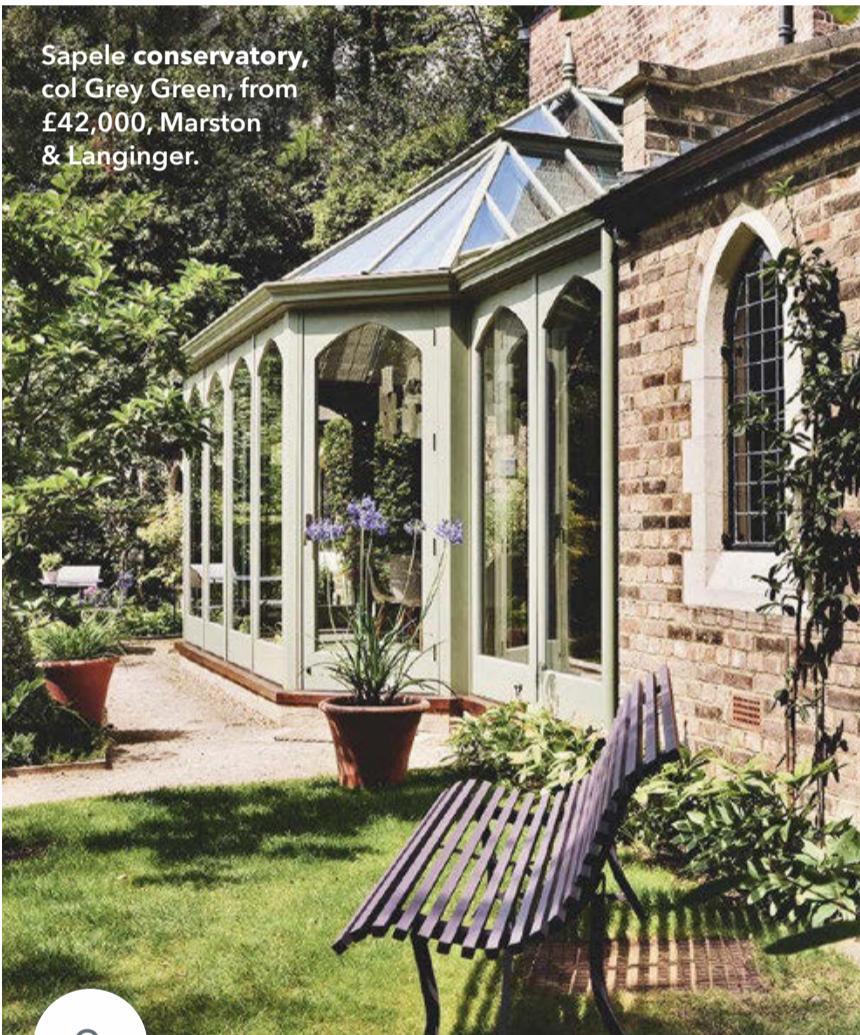


**Pretty design**  
Decorative easy-care ceramic tiles.  
• **Deco Tribeca Acero ceramic tiles, £81.56 sq m, Porcelanosa.**

8

### Material choice

'Conservatories in aluminium can copy the traditional proportions and profile of timber for the perfect fit with a country house or cottage,' says Nick Bashford, Director, Alitex. 'Unless someone points it out, you probably won't realise that a conservatory is powder-coated aluminium rather than hand-painted wood. Aluminium is very low maintenance and weathertight, as it expands and contracts less than wood.'



9

### Attention to detail

'A bespoke conservatory was the ideal addition to this mid-Victorian gothic house,' says Richard Ross-Harper, Senior Designer, Marston & Langinger. 'The window profiles correspond to templates taken of the existing house, so the proportion and springing of the pointed arch could be appropriately matched. The windows are top hung – a throwback to the vintage greenhouse vernacular.' »

## How can I link living areas?

### Old meets new

'Our brief was for a contemporary double-height structural glass solution to link the front and rear of a barn,' says Andrew Sale, Architect, Tromb  . 'We used the area where the doors would have been to maximise the views, including doors on both sides and aligning all materials for a flush appearance with the glass.'

### Beautiful frame

'Oak adds character to a project,' says Edward Hamilton, Managing Director, Oakmasters. 'On this link building, the curved braces aren't just decorative, but also stop the frame from racking. They sit behind the glass, so they don't interfere with the weather seals.'



Vaulted oak frame and glazing, £20,000, Oakmasters.

### Seamless join

'This project for an old dairy in Oxfordshire links the kitchen to an annexe with a bedroom and bathroom,' says Rawden Rogerson, Managing Director, Bartholomew. 'The new glazed sitting area brings light into the kitchen and has high-level automatic roof vents.'

10



Glazed structure, £46,000, Tromb  .

Tip

Double glazing with solar-control glass on outer panes and low-emissivity glass on inner helps regulate temperature.



Utile conservatory with automatic roof vents, £48,000, Bartholomew.



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## PROJECT 2

# BATHROOMS

### How can clever storage help me de-clutter the bathroom?

**C**learing the space of clutter can make even a bijou bathroom feel expansive. To restore order the country way, find furniture that's inspiring as well as practical, using freestanding storage in a mix of styles for an individual look. Keep an eye out for vintage pieces that can be repainted.

Modular furniture is another option: pieces are linked in style and size, and can be configured to suit your room. 'The trend is for wall-hung units, fitted without a plinth,' says David Gray, Product Designer, Roper Rhodes. 'They have a weightless look, but offer

the same amount of storage as a standard [floor-standing] unit.'

Choose fitted furniture, tailored to your needs, to maximise every inch – even awkward corners – in a smaller bathroom and also hide pipework. In an older home, bespoke designs can accommodate walls, ceilings and floors that aren't perfectly straight or flat. 'A bespoke cabinet maker will be able to advise on imaginative ways of using the most exquisite materials, which can elevate even the most pared-back of designs,' says Steven de Munnich, Design Director, Smallbone of Devizes.

**Standing tall**  
Slim storage slots neatly into a corner, and if it also reaches high above a dado rail it'll be big enough to take all your bathroom sundries with ease. Made from sustainably sourced timber, this tall boy is available in four finishes, including Oyster, shown, and with a choice of handles.



Classic Straight tall boy, £835, Heritage Bathrooms.



#### Hanging space

Encourage tidy ways in the bathroom with an oak-finish accessory rail fitted with six practical hooks. It will hang onto towels, shower caps and more, while an optional basket is designed to slot on for extra storage.



#### Double drawer

To maintain a sleek external appearance, this vanity unit has been designed with a single deep drawer front, but opening it reveals a slim drawer hidden within, ideal for organising smaller items.

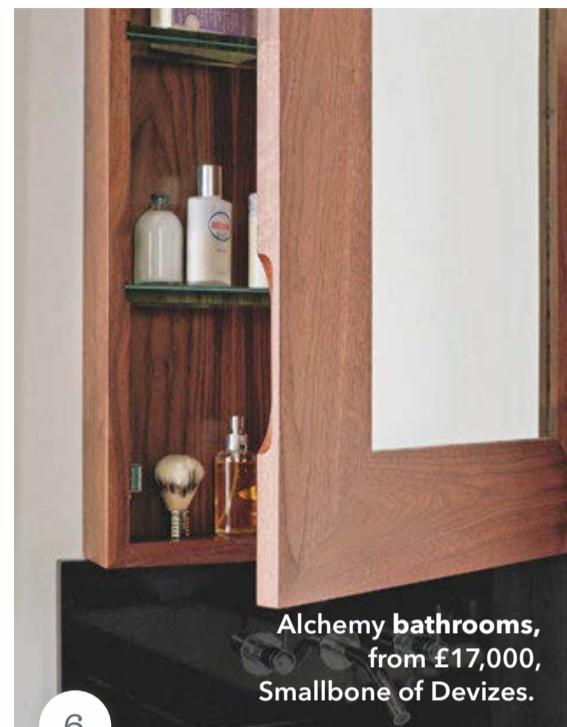
4

**Shaker style**

For versatility, go for a vanity unit with cupboard and drawers, in a hand-painted finish with chrome handles. The basin sits on top of the unit rather than being inset, allowing for more internal storage in the cabinet. Choose from a gleaming marble top, shown, or dark granite. »



Marlborough vanity unit with basin, colour Cobblestone, £1,187; honed marble worktop, £324; wall cabinet, £323, all Laura Ashley.



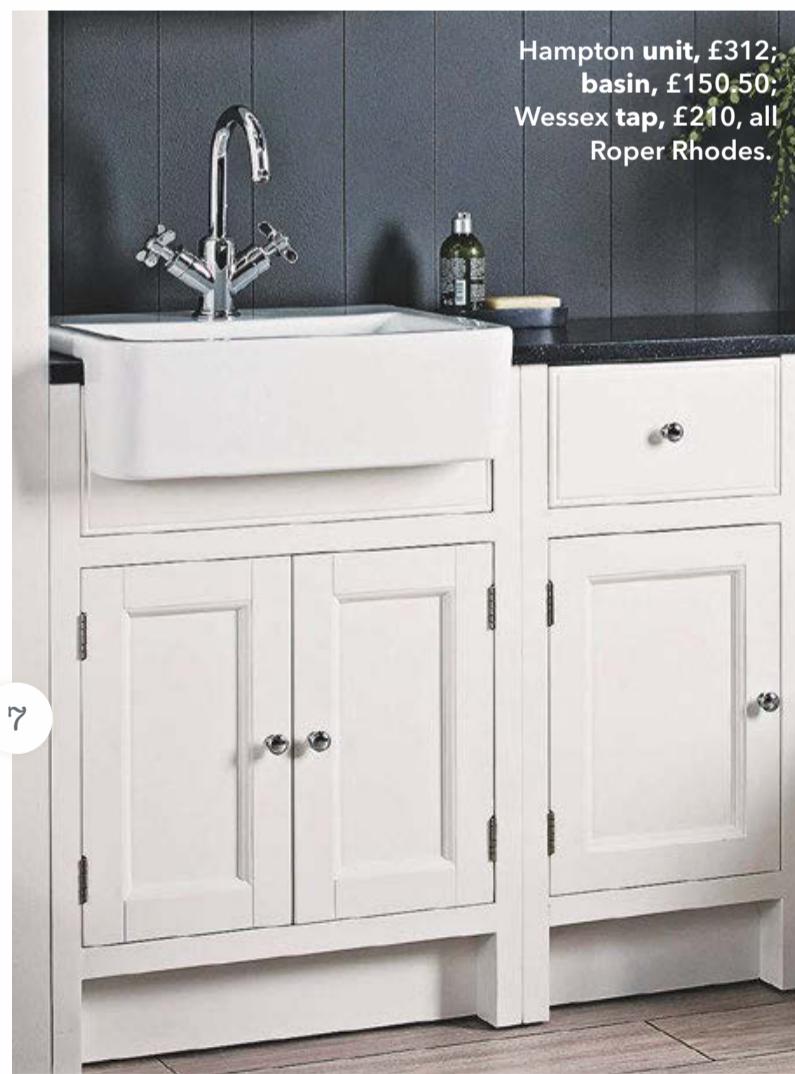
6

**Mirrored storage**

An elegant bespoke cabinet in a beautiful wood such as black walnut, chosen for its rich character and subtle grain, can give your bathroom a truly luxurious look. This design can also be painted in any colour or finish by Smallbone's specialists.



Sneak in extra storage space by using a slim larder-style pull-out unit, or an under-basin drawer that fits around a wastepipe.



8

**Ladder shelves**

Open storage is a visual plus as it doesn't make a space feel closed in. This country-style ladder keeps towels and small items within reach and can be repositioned as necessary. Also think about a stack of lidded woven baskets to hold clean towels.

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Mrs Farmer, Tonbridge, Kent



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## Which range suits my needs best?



A colourful range cooker adds welcome warmth to a country kitchen and even traditional styles boast the latest features. With always-on heat, classic cast-iron ranges such as an Aga accumulate heat for cooking; a Rayburn also supplies hot water for central heating. Makes such as Steel Cucine and Rangemaster offer gas, dual-fuel and electric ovens as well as induction or gas hobs.

**Fuel choices** Oil, the traditional fuel for ranges, remains popular in areas without mains gas. Gas is cheaper and more efficient, while dual fuel (gas hob, electric oven) offers control and efficiency. Wood-fired ranges, such as an Esse, are eco friendly and many heat water for radiators but you need a ready supply of logs.

**Range tops** Agas and Rayburns have one or two always-on hot plates; other configurations include induction, griddles, char broilers and French tops (heavy steel plates heated by hidden gas burners).

**Pre-owned** There's a good trade in second-hand cast-iron ranges, enabling you to invest for less. Visit [classycookers.co.uk](http://classycookers.co.uk) to find out more.



### 1 Best for... heating the home

The built-in boiler heats 20 radiators and provides hot water, while the cast-iron hotplate has space for 8 pans. Solid fuel. A-rated boiler. H91xW99.5xD58.2cm. Ovens: 47L (top) and 34.1L.

- **Rayburn 600, £7,549, Rayburn.**



### 2 Best for... traditional cooking

An iconic range in 12 colours with always-on heat, 2 cast-iron hot plates plus warming plate or hob (gas or electric ceramic). H85.1xW148.7xD69.8cm. Ovens: 2 x 46.41L; 2 x 43.9L.

- **4-oven Traditional Aga, from £9,425, Aga.**



3

### Best for... speed

Available in 10 colours including stainless steel, this has a 5-burner induction hob plus 2 ovens (fan and multifunction). Electric. Energy rating: A. H91xW100xD59.5cm.

Oven capacity: 81L (right), 73L (left). • **Elise 100 Induction, £2,469, Rangemaster.**



4

### Best for... value

With a grill, easy-clean ovens, 5-burner gas hob and slow-cooking options, this carries a superb price tag. Available in pale blue or black. Dual fuel. Energy rating: A. H90xW90xD60cm. Ovens: 63L (main), 79L (tall).

- **AL90F230 A La Carte, £899, Leisure at Currys.**



5

### Best for... smaller kitchens

For those who want constant heat without solid fuel. An induction hob on the right means heat can be turned off in summer. Electric. H90xW90xD60cm. Ovens: 56L (top) and 53L.

- **90i, £6,250, Everhot.**

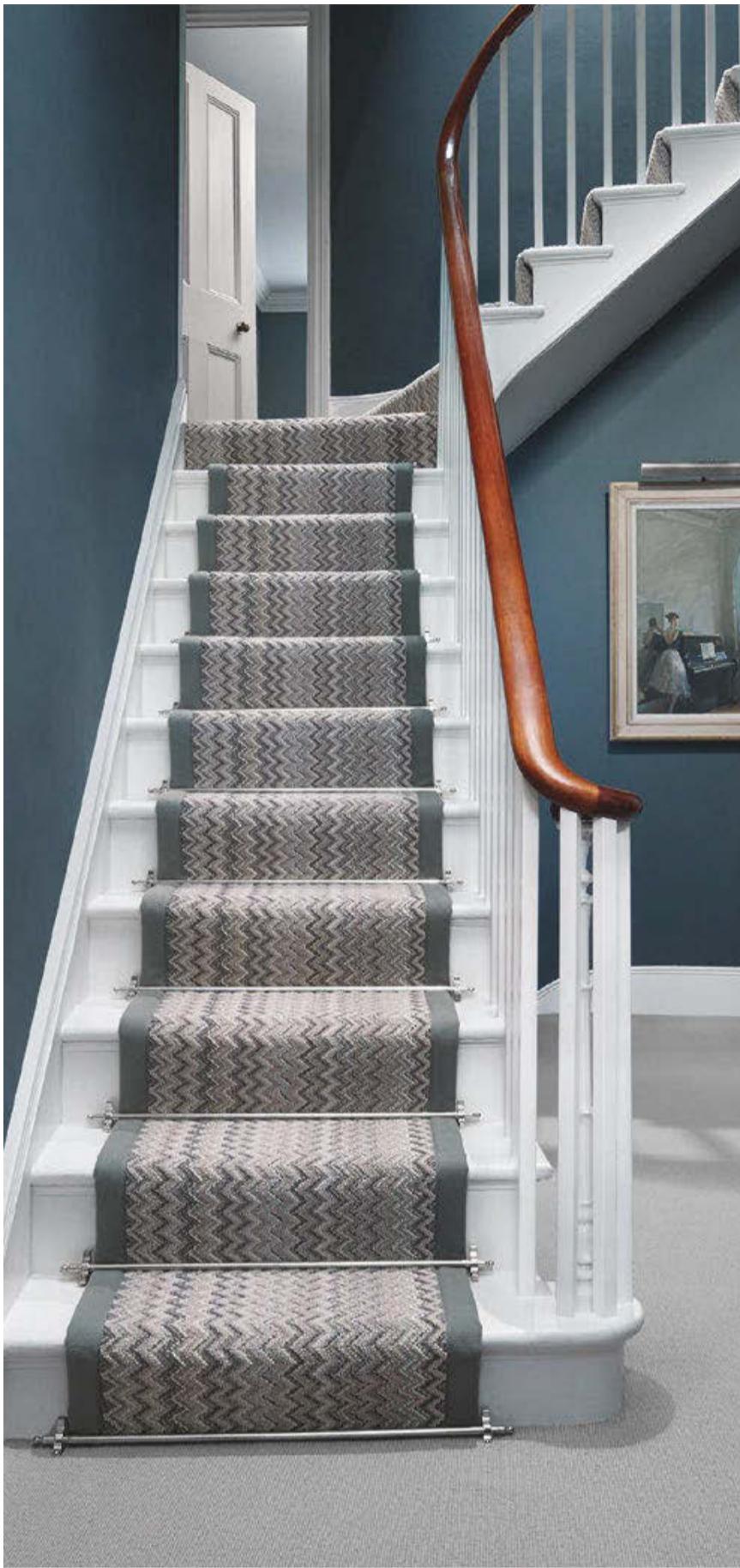


6

### Best for... entertaining

Two ovens, each with 9 functions and fast heat-up time, offer more than enough cooking space for Sunday lunch. The hob has an electric griddle. Dual fuel. Energy rating: A. H87xW119.5xD60cm. Ovens: 2 x 52L.

- **Fleet 120 Twin, £4,799, Britannia.**



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# The Country Decorator

New series!

**Decorative tiles** in playful patterns are featuring on floors this season – what better reason to look down for inspiration and plan a chic country scheme from the bottom up



Arabesque tiles, 8127V, 15.1 cm sq, £224.95 sq m, Original Style.



## Cheer up a kitchen with swirly pattern

A gently curling design in tones of stone, sand and grey will add the illusion of softness to a country floor. Jenny Wasson, Design Co-ordinator, Original Style, says, 'Scrolling patterns with soft curves look wonderful in a country-style home as they reference earlier historical floor patterns and are restful, calming and inviting.'



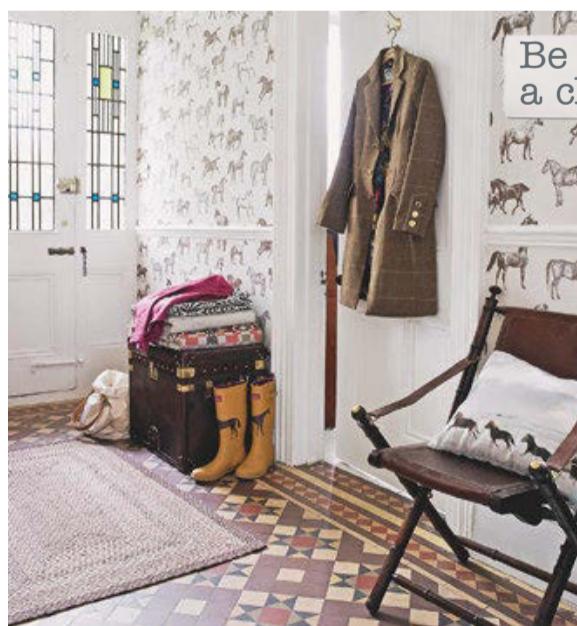
Create a feature rug panel

In a small bathroom create a sense of space by using border tile designs to resemble a rug outline on the tiny floor space. For a contemporary feel, team simple border tiles with a panel of plain ones, or for a more eclectic finish try decorative floral tiles for the centre with a co-ordinating design for the border.



Arabesque tiles, 12x20.5cm, cols Draa (blue), Imini (taupe) and Dades (white), £119.85 sq m, Fired Earth.

**Add interest with shapely tiles** Panelling teamed with a chequerboard tiled floor is a traditional feature of many country homes. Rob Whitaker, Creative Director, Fired Earth, suggests Moorish designs 'with sweeping curves for an eye-catching contrast to angular panelling, to soften the scheme and add splashes of colour'.



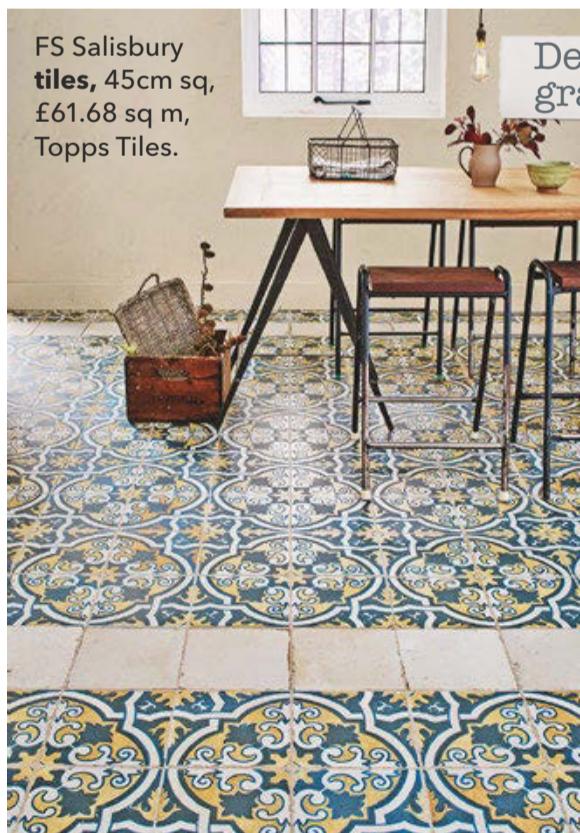
Be in step with a classic scheme

Intricate geometric patterned floors are synonymous with the generous hallways of large Victorian and Edwardian period homes. You can create a welcoming feel for the entrance hall in a smaller country home by using classic encaustic tiles in traditional styles and colours. »

## Design secrets



**Make a patchwork** Embrace one of this season's hot trends by mixing bold patterns in bright shades for a quirky hallway floor. The tiles here are from the same collection and repeat some of the same colourways and motifs, but you could also mix and match. It's a good way, too, to use up stock ends. Marry with vintage-style furniture and accessories for a true country Boho feel.



FS Salisbury tiles, 45cm sq, £61.68 sq m, Topps Tiles.

### Design on a grand scale

Add decorative grandeur to a classic country home using a strong-patterned tile alongside plain stone paving tiles. 'Large-format encaustic-effect tiles with intricate detailing capture the essence of the Mediterranean and, mixed with plain tiles, they will create a feature floor guaranteed to bring elegance to your interior scheme,' says Tim Tatlock, Head of Buying, Topps Tiles.



### Use geometrics in modern ways

For a contemporary twist to a traditional black and white geometric design introduce a new colour, such as pale taupe, to soften the overall look. Team the flooring with clean-lined period-style details such as louvred shutters, a dado rail, simple wooden furniture or a fireplace surround painted in the same accent shade to ensure there is maximum impact.

**Tricks of the trade...**  
To avoid patterned tiles competing with period details go for a monochrome theme or reclaimed tiles with their muted patina

Harriet Roberts, Co-founder and Director, Bert & May



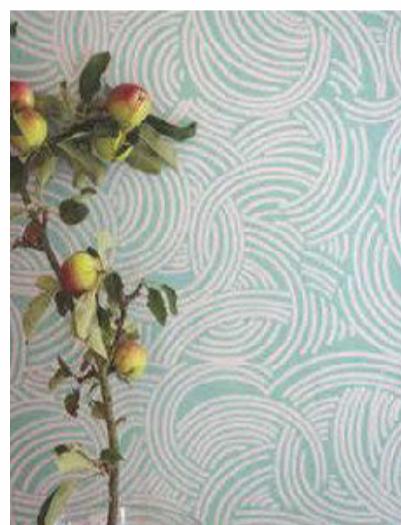
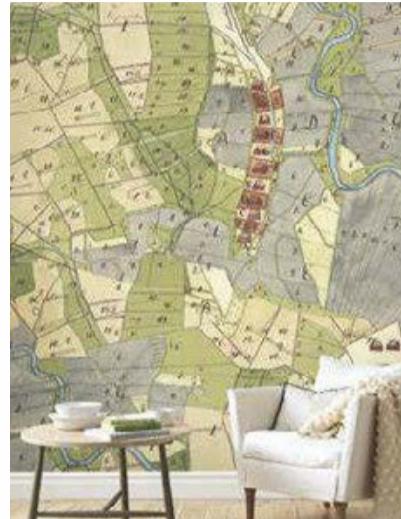
Try patterned tiles in subtle shades in rooms without skirting for an earthy pared-back feel.

Antique tiles, 59.6cm sq, £87.12 sq m, Porcelanosa.

**Country meets contemporary** Bang on trend and extremely easy to achieve, a highly decorative tiled floor will lend a period country-style feel to a modern kitchen. For the most successful effect, stick to a pattern in a soft neutral palette and make it 'modern rustic', with walls clad in natural wood, sleek white high-gloss units and appliances in industrial-style stainless steel.

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# Growing gracefully

CREATING A GARDEN FROM SCRATCH ALLOWED VANESSA WINTERS TO ACHIEVE THE PERFECT BALANCE OF ABUNDANT PLANTING AND CLASSICAL DESIGN

*Early-summer border*

The exuberant display includes the ornamental onion, *Allium hollandicum* 'Purple Sensation', just topping *Nepeta racemosa* 'Walker's Low' (also opposite) with *Alchemilla mollis*, Oriental poppies, foxgloves, aquilegias, hardy geraniums and white valerian. »





## At home with...

**Owners** Vanessa Winters and her husband Terry, who run their own design company. They live here with their Shar Pei, Jambo.

**House** A four-bedroom property built in 2009, replacing a former Ministry of Defence home.

**Garden** The one-acre garden wraps around the house in a series of lawns, beds and borders linked by paths, with a potager, orchard, gazebo, formal parterre, grassy mound, lavender collection and seating areas.

### *The joy of watching fledgling plants flourish*

and grow intensifies each year for Vanessa and Terry Winters as they develop their new garden. 'We had long dreamed of creating a garden from scratch,' say the couple, who moved into their home in West Dean, near Salisbury, four years ago.

The move took place after they had spent several years scouring the area for a property within easy reach of Terry's design studio in Winchester. They chose Ordnance House as it sits alone among fields with views of Dean Hill, now a nature reserve. 'The garden has a wonderful crystal-clear light that is special to the area,' says Terry. 'It sometimes feels almost as though we're in the south of France.'

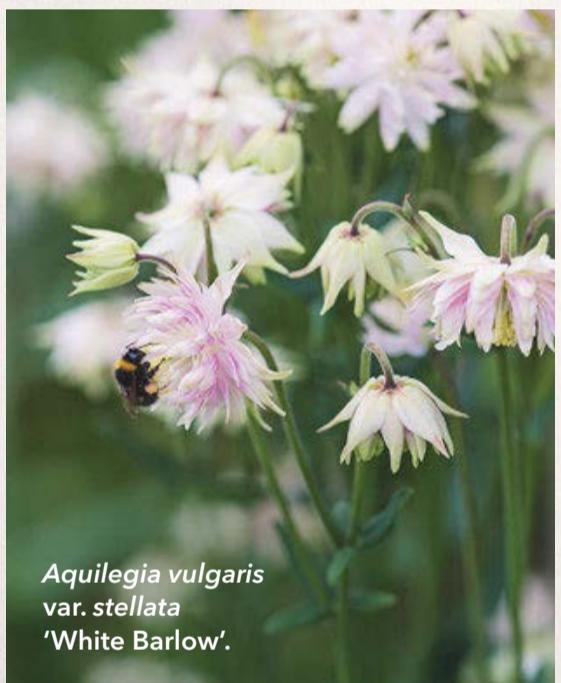
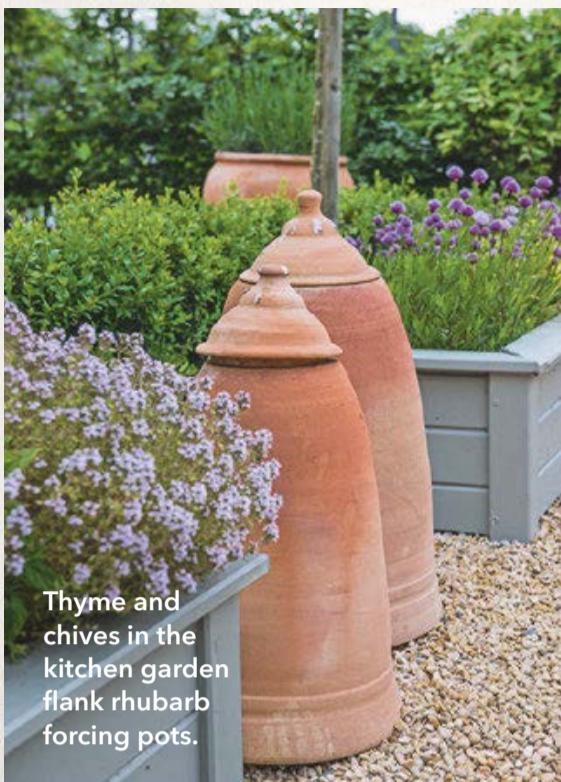
For much of their first summer Vanessa and Terry were busy finalising a design and preparing for a digger to landscape the area. Once that was completed, the back-breaking work of wheelbarrowing tonnes of topsoil and compost to fill beds and borders began. Grass seed was sown on newly levelled lawns, and key trees and shrubs, such as hawthorns, hornbeams, birches, apples, pears and standards of Portugal laurel and *Viburnum tinus* were planted.

Gradually, a garden that wrapped around the four sides of Ordnance House emerged with a skilful arrangement of box-edged beds and long borders filled with herbaceous planting and anchored by topiary. The layout of the gently rising back garden revolves around a circular bed planted with four hawthorns (*Crataegus persimilis* 'Prunifolia'). Providing a central focal point, this bed also forms an axis through which two main paths pass, linking different sections and areas of planting. A path leads to an elegant oak bench on the far »

### *Catmint path*

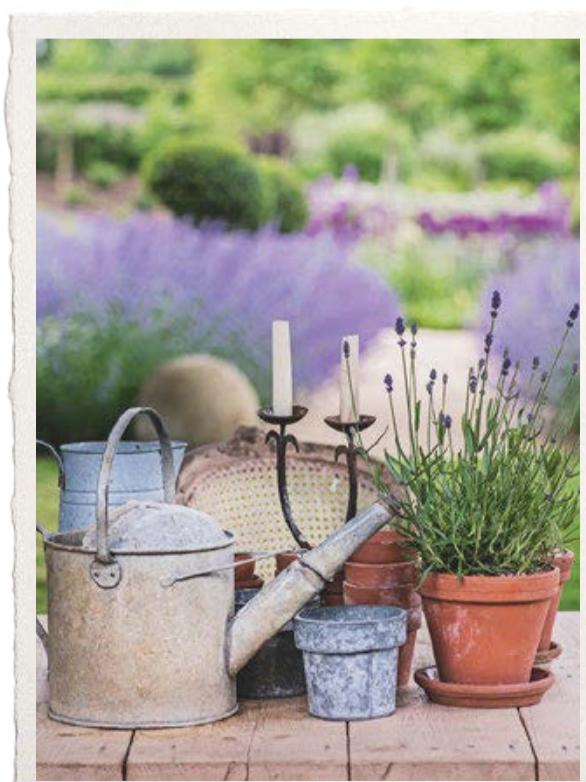
A path edged in a mix of catmint (*Nepeta 'Six Hills Giant'*) is gradually being replaced with *N. racemosa* 'Walker's Low') leads to a circle of broad-leaved cockspur thorn (*Crataegus persimilis* 'Prunifolia'), rising above purple and white alliums.





### What we love most...

'The way the house and garden complement each other, with the garden providing different vistas from within the house'



*What makes this garden so special...*

‘Planting every plant, shrub and tree and getting to know every inch intimately’



*Box-edged circle*

White-flowering hawthorn trees rise above a froth of alliums, foxgloves, white valerian and purple sweet rocket.



## Espaliered fruit trees

Carefully trained fruit trees edge the lawn - the result is an attractive and space-saving way to grow fruit.

side of the garden. 'It is quiet place to sit, and seen from the house is a pleasure to look at,' says Vanessa.

A broad catmint walk runs diagonally along the garden ending at the eastern corner in a newly planted orchard surrounding an oak-framed gazebo, built by a local craftsman to Terry's design. 'The rustic structure fits into the rural landscape and provides a very visible focal point,' he says.

It also balances the opposite, westerly end of the catmint walk with a formal gravel parterre of Portugal laurel standards, stone, box and lavender balls. 'We wanted a scheme that incorporated hidden areas and gave open views over the garden, with glimpses of the countryside beyond,' says Vanessa.

The different areas are defined with box hedging, while yew and box balls are used throughout. Some paths have been designed wider at one end and narrower at the other. 'It's an old perspective trick to make paths look longer,' says Vanessa.

The catmint walk edged in a mix of *Nepeta* 'Six Hills Giant' and *N. racemosa* 'Walker's Low' attracts scores of bees. It skirts lawns, a line of espaliered fruit trees and borders and beds, including one filled with unusual lavender varieties. The lavender thrives in the original poor, sharp-draining soil. 'I've become slightly obsessed with it, adding more whenever I can,' says Terry. The collection includes unusual *Lavandula angustifolia* and later-flowering *L. x intermedia* varieties to give an extended display. 'The lavender bed plays host to many bees and butterflies - a sign of a healthy, balanced garden,' he says.

The design is continually evolving, especially the tree planting. Shapely tree specimens include three tall *Pyrus calleryana* 'Chanticleer' planted along the catmint path. Their flowering »

## Modern Country Classic

### Beautiful bulbs

Use to achieve a mature look in a young garden.

#### Need to know...

- Start by improving soil by laying a thick mulch of compost across the beds and borders.
- Plant hundreds of bulbs in autumn to run in rivers and drifts. Buy in bulk by the sack from specialists, such as Direct Bulbs (01962 840038, [directbulbs.co.uk](http://directbulbs.co.uk)).
- Flower beds can be any shape or size, but first mark out on the ground with spray paint, then view from all angles, checking size and location.
  - Either draw a plan of where to plant the bulbs, or mark out on the ground, placing the bulbs in odd-numbered groups.
  - Plant each bulb at a depth at least three times its height to ensure it is strongly rooted.



## On our doorstep...

**Visit...** 'Longstock Park Water Gardens (01264 810904, [longstockpark.co.uk](http://longstockpark.co.uk)) in Stockbridge - a lovely garden and little-known part of the John Lewis Partnership.'

**Shop at...** 'Niwaki (0345 474 1041, [niwaki.com](http://niwaki.com)) in Shaftesbury. This tool showroom has brilliant Japanese pruners and secateurs.'

### Go for a meal at...

'La Parisienne (01794 512067, [la-parisienne.co.uk](http://la-parisienne.co.uk)) in Romsey. It is the most authentic French-run restaurant and serves delicious food.'

heralds summer, when beds and borders spill over with bulbs and herbaceous perennials.

'The planting ripples with colours of raspberry, white, purple and cream running through like a layer cake,' says Terry. Purple and white alliums ('Purple Sensation' and lofty 'Mount Everest') have perfect globes that rise above a froth of mauve sweet rocket, wine-coloured aquilegias and white valerian. Then there are spires, such as foxgloves in shades of pink, cream or white, rising above a swathe of vanilla-coloured *Sisyrinchium striatum* and the silky petals of *Papaver orientale* 'Patty's Plum'.

Often in gardening duos one partner is more active than the other, but this garden is definitely a team effort. 'We both like structure, order and harmony in equal measure, balanced by billowing and abundant planting,' they say.

For a garden so recently completed, all the plants – edible, structural and ornamental – have settled and grown at an astonishingly fast rate. 'It's due to light, good air circulation and rich, sharp-draining soil, and also by planting so densely, moisture is retained at the base of the plants, keeping the roots cool, too. Plants thrive in these conditions.'

For Vanessa, the productive potager is a particular joy. 'To harvest fresh fruit and vegetables just a few short steps from the kitchen gives me such pleasure,' she says. 'After much hard work, we feel that at last we have a grown-up garden and not one in the making – and that gives us such satisfaction.'

**Ordnance House, West Dean, Salisbury, Wiltshire, opens for the National Gardens Scheme ([ngs.org.uk](http://ngs.org.uk)) on 24 May 2015. Groups by appointment between 1 June and 19 July.**

**Potager** This productive part of the garden has potatoes, carrots and lettuce varieties. A young pleached hornbeam hedge separates the potager from the flower garden.



# Plant a flower meadow

ATTRACTING A WEALTH OF BEES AND BUTTERFLIES, PERENNIAL AND ANNUAL FLOWER MEADOWS ARE AN ECO-FRIENDLY ALTERNATIVE TO LAWNS

## Perennial

Perennial meadows do best on poor soils, which reduce competition from wild grasses. On fertile ground, remove the top layer and break up the sub-soil, clearing weeds as you

go. Consider planting yellow rattle – this self-seeding annual lives off grasses, sapping their strength, helping a meadow thrive. The dry seed pods rattle, hence the name.



### 1 Solo planting

Under apple blossom or in light woodland, snake's head fritillaries (*Fritillaria meleagris*) are a welcome sight in mid-spring. With drooping bell-shaped flowerheads that are either white or purple tessellated with pink (above), fritillaries happily share grassy areas with daffodils, cowslips or buttercups. They flourish on heavy soil and self-seed if the grass isn't mown until early autumn. But wildflower meadows grown for spring flowering can be cut once they've finished – and sacrificing later flowers can give you back a lawn for summer.

#### Tip

Many flowers are self-seeding, so if the meadow is correctly managed, the flower population will improve with time.



### 2 Mixed spring bulbs

**A perennial meadow planted with a succession of bulbs is ever changing, sometimes even on the same day. This meadow is studded with jewel-like colours from winter to spring, moving from crocuses to narcissi, windflower, grape hyacinths and dainty *Tulipa saxatilis* (Bakeri Group) 'Lilac Wonder'. Spontaneity is key, not always easy to capture, and this style is time-consuming to plant and maintain but well worth it for prolonged and varied flowering.**

#### Tip

For the most naturalistic look when planting bulbs, take a handful and throw out gently. Dig the bulbs in wherever they fall.



### 3 Traditional style

When ox-eye daisies flower, they turn perennial grasslands into a haze of milky white, with their gently flowing flowers glowing in the evening light, hence their other common name of moon daisy. The mainstay of hay meadows, ox-eye daisies thrive alongside buttercups, bird's-foot trefoils, cranesbills and knapweed, beneath a sky in which a skylark sings. Sadly, most of our original meadowland has been ploughed up, but gardeners are encouraged to redress the balance and grow one where they can.

#### Tip

Mow in late summer, leave cuttings for a day or two so insects can escape safely. Larger meadows may need a path mown through.

## Tip

With camassias allow the seed to set and spill before mowing the grass for the first time around August, then mow again in autumn.



## 4 Single colour for late spring

In early spring, this perennial meadow is carpeted with *Crocus tommasinianus*, followed by species narcissi and fritillaries. By late May, as the grasses and buttercups take over, camassias appear en masse (above). Tall blue quamash (*C. leichtlinii* subsp. *suksdorffii* Caerulea Group), which

naturalises in grass, especially if the ground is moist, increases rapidly over the years. The poorer the soil, the richer the tapestry in this meadow. In more fertile soil, coarse elements such as nettles, docks, Yorkshire fog (grass) and cow parsley would thrive, smothering all else. »



# Annual

Whether you're converting a lawn into a flower-rich area, transforming a shady corner or planting to attract pollinators, there are seed blends for all soils, rich or

poor. Dig over the ground before summer, a year ahead. Sow when the ground is warm in April or May. Roll over the ground, create shallow drills and broadcast evenly.



## Tip

Mixing the small seed with fine sawdust or sand makes it easier to see where it lands.

### 5 The late kaleidoscope

Weeks after sowing, an organic wildflower meadow takes shape. It starts as a glorious succession of pink and mauve toadflax, blue cornflowers and poppies (right), giving way to a golden blaze of coreopsis and corn marigolds before fading gracefully into autumn. A key plant throughout

is fiddleneck or purple tansy (*Phacelia tanacetifolia*), a hardy annual that's a good cut flower and, come autumn, can be dug back into the soil as organic matter. It's also courted by bees and beneficial insects such as lacewings and ladybirds, whose nymphs feed on unwanted aphids.



Meadows ripple with a life of their own, changing with the light and season.



## 6 Honey bee attractors

Next to a beehive a small area of lawn has been replanted here with an annual wildflower meadow of corn camomile, field poppies, clover, toadflax, sheep's bit scabious, cow parsley and cornflowers. All are nectar-rich flowers loved by bees. The planting is dense with individual flowers jostling for position and, like a good picture, the longer one looks, the more detail emerges. It's miraculous that such beauty comes from a handful of seeds scattered only a few weeks previously. Short-lived annual poppies add increasing numbers of seedheads as summer gives way to autumn.

*Tip* Depending on the mix, annual meadows flower within weeks of sowing and stay lovely for months. Seed can be bought in mixes for spring or summer and also for which insects they attract.



## 7 Early autumn cultivars

**Coming into flower in late summer, this cultivated meadow of cosmos, cow parsley, scarlet flax and field poppies will continue well into autumn. Cosmos produces much feathery foliage, which not only adds body but also stifles weeds. By autumn, this meadow will have created waves of receding colour, flowers appearing as if handfuls of seed had been thrown into the air, to fall where nature chooses: cultivated spontaneity at its best.**

*Tip*

**Don't try to feed the soil – the poorer it is, the better the show of flowers will be.**



## 8 Butterfly bringers

This small garden meadow has been planted specifically to attract butterflies with a fulsome carpet of corn poppies and marigolds, California poppies, purple tansy, lady's lace, cornflowers (inset above), painted daisies, godetia, mallow, scabious and corn camomile. On the perimeter, there is an area of nettles for small tortoiseshells and peacock butterflies, as well as patches of longer grass where caterpillars can shelter. Setting aside an area of wild flowers not only attracts more species but it also provides a safe haven where numerous creatures can lay eggs and overwinter.

*Tip*

In autumn the meadow should be cut back, dug over and left fallow until the following spring when the whole process can be repeated again.

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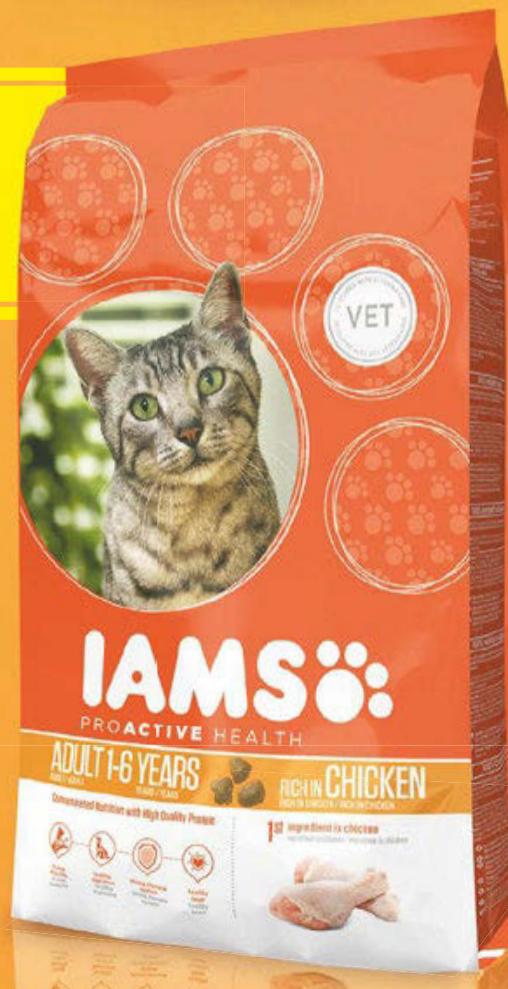


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## 1 Bone up on breeds

Get to know your dog varieties with this witty collection. **Breeds - A Canine Compendium**, £9.99, Square Peg.



## 2 Build a community pond

and give water wildlife a home...

- **Contact your council** to find out about suitable village land, ideally clear of trees.
- **Draft in volunteers** to dig, line and fill the pond.
- **Visit a garden centre** to ask what plants to include - hornwort, ivy-leaf duckweed and water soldier are good.
- **Make it safe** with fencing, signs and sloping sides.
- **Be kind to frogs** and avoid chemicals ([froglife.org](http://froglife.org)).

## 10 ways to Make life lovely

Fashion, wellbeing, eco, pets, travel and other nice things



### 4 Have a 'hearty' breakfast

Handcrafted from sustainable solid oak, this egg cup ensures morning loveliness. £28 for 2, Hop & Peck.



3 Be bright and beautiful Make the most of the good weather and step out in this breezy dress, inspired by bold seasonal blooms.

Pleated scoop-back patterned dress, £110, Land's End.

## 5 Tap into nature's spa

Wash your face with dew on May Day morning. According to folklore, dew contains magical properties that make your skin beautiful the rest of the year. »





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## 6 Buy British Brintons

William Brinton saw a gap in the flooring market in 1783 and began spinning wool for carpets from his local mill in Kidderminster. Brintons is still family run, employing skilled dyers, spinners and weavers. Committed to good British design, it holds the carpet industry's largest pattern archive. Among its 20,000 new designs a year we like Epsom Stripe (left), £85 sq m, from the Laura Ashley collection and Marquis Regal Red Flake, £90 sq m.



## 7 Juice it up

Visit Abel & Cole online to treat yourself to a seasonal juicing box for healthy smoothies (recipes included), £12.50. Also receive regular deliveries of fresh organic fruit and vegetables, from £11.

8



### Go wild with... Cuckoo flower

Celebrate May Day with this sweet spring bloom

- **Enjoy the pink petals** of this hedgerow plant, said to flower at the cuckoo's first call: a sign of late spring.
- **Hand out posies.** Traditionally, children gathered wildflowers on May Day to give to friends and family.
- **Crown a May Queen.** Fill a rattan and bamboo ring (£4.40, The Essentials Company) with leaves, cuckoo flower and seasonal blooms.



## 9 Smell delicious

Start your day with one of these reviving new botanical body washes and shower gels

- 1 Extracts of elderflower and gooseberry sourced from the Lost Gardens of Heligan. Summer Rising Bath & Shower Gel, Cornish Hedgerows, £20 for 250ml, Noble Isle.
- 2 A citrus and green tea mix ensures a feel-good fragrance. Green Tea &

Grapefruit Fine Body Wash, £13 for 300ml, Heyland & Whittle.

3 Delicately fragranced gel with organic honey, hydrating aloe vera and calming camomile. Frangipani & Orange Blossom Shower Gel, £17 for 250ml, Abahna. »

10

## Take to a bike

Nothing beats cycling on a country trail.  
Start from one of these hotels or B&Bs...



### THE SPREAD EAGLE MIDHURST, WEST SUSSEX

#### We love it because...

It's in the South Downs National Park with over 1,200km of public bridleways, so there's a bike route for every level.

#### What are the rooms like?

Bedrooms and suites are furnished with antiques.

**And the food?** Delicious lunch on the terrace on warmer days, or formal dinners by candlelight.

**How much?** From £219 for a double room with breakfast and dinner plus cycling concierge session; maps; bike lock-up; spa and pool; leg and foot energising treatment.

**The Spread Eagle Hotel,**  
01730 816911,  
hshotels.co.uk.

### BALLYGALLY CASTLE BALLYGALLY, COUNTY ANTRIM

#### We love it because...

It's on the Antrim coast road, where you'll find famous landmarks such as the Giant's Causeway. The setting forms the backdrop of films and the TV series *Game of Thrones*. Take the 2014 Giro d'Italia route or if that is too energetic, sup a dram at Bushmills Distillery.

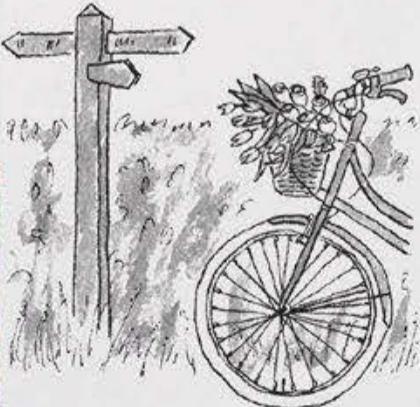
#### What are the rooms like?

Contemporary style with comfortable beds. Enjoy views of the landscaped gardens or Ballygally Bay.

**And the food?** From bistro menus to private dining in the medieval dungeon.

**How much?** From £110 for a double with breakfast.

**Ballygally Castle Hotel,**  
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### ALTON ALBANY FARM B&B BARR, AYRSHIRE

**We love it because...** You can try mountainbiking the lofty Carrick Forest Mountain Trail towards Loch Doon, or gentler roads in the Ayrshire Alps. Perfect for families and dog friendly, too, the farmhouse is at the gateway to Galloway Forest Dark Sky Park.

#### What are the rooms like?

Spacious with wonderful beds. Look out for the owners' artworks.

**And the food?** Enjoy tea and cake on arrival. You can walk to a pub with restaurant for supper.

**How much?** From £85 a night for a double room and full breakfast.

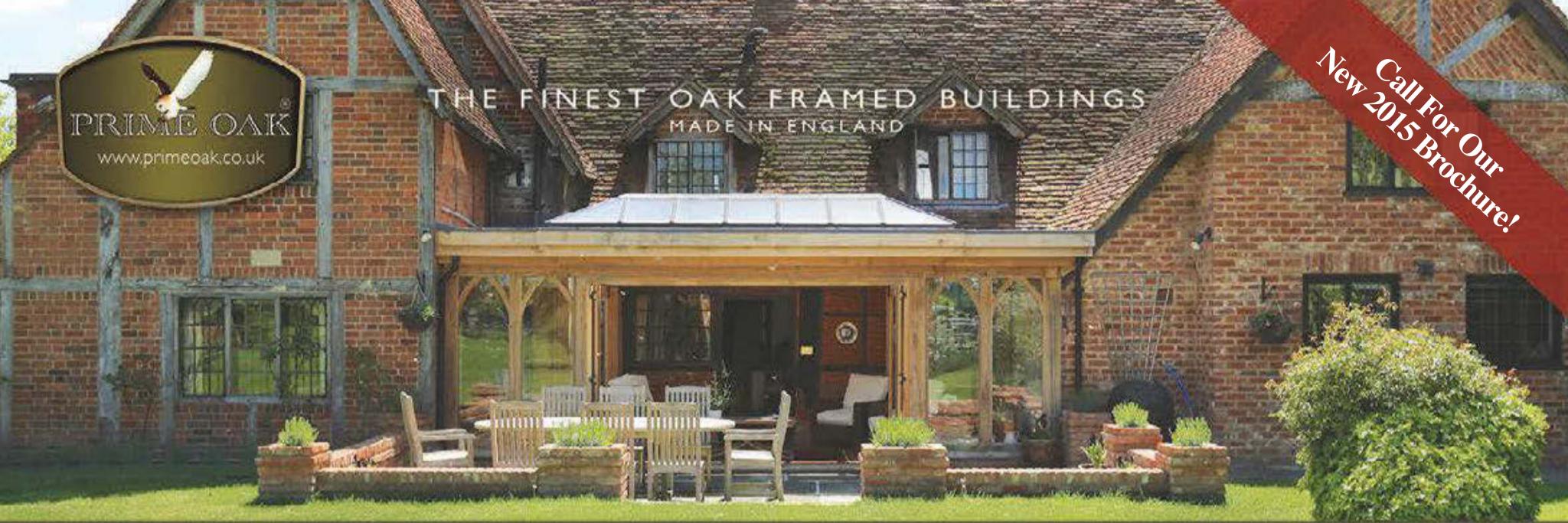
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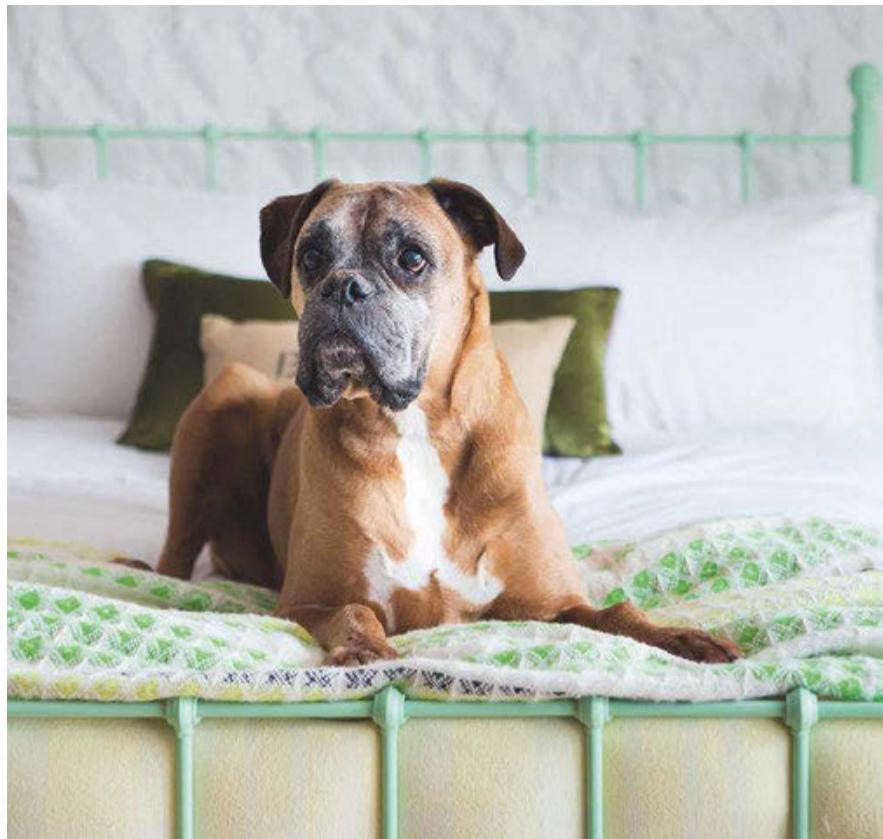
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From the makers of



A MENU FROM THE  
*country kitchen*

# My perfect weekend food

Food writer Rosie Birkett cooks relaxed, feel-good recipes, ideal for Saturdays and Sundays »



## Comfort & company

'I've always thought that cooking is a little bit magical,' says Rosie Birkett. 'You take something as simple as a potato and transform it into a dish that makes you purr with pleasure, whether it's salt and vinegar-doused chips, a golden garlic-spiked roast spud or a velvety velouté. Cooking is remarkable in that sense, as it's one of the most creative things we do for ourselves. It's also about looking after yourself and the ones you love, and is one of life's greatest comforts. For me, there is nothing on this earth I would rather do than bring together all the people I love at the weekend and share good food and wine with them. We eat to live but there's nothing better than living to eat.'



### *Coconut and almond granola*

Really easy to make with a lovely, satisfying crunch,  
this is packed with goodness. »



## *Kale and coriander pancakes*

Top this healthier version of the breakfast pancake with slow-roasted tomatoes and a rich avocado cream.



*Coconut and almond granola*

MAKES 750G

**350g organic jumbo oats**  
**1 tsp chia seeds (try Waitrose)**  
**80g pumpkin seeds**  
**15g sunflower seeds**  
**150g flaked almonds**  
**50g desiccated coconut**  
**1½ tsp mixed sweet ground spices such as cinnamon, ginger and nutmeg**  
**4 tbsp coconut oil, melted (try Sainsbury's)**  
**4 tbsp maple syrup**  
**60g sultanas**

- 1 Preheat the oven to 180°C/Fan 160°C/Gas 4. Line a baking tray with baking parchment.
- 2 Put the oats, seeds, almonds, coconut and spices in a large mixing bowl. Pour over the melted coconut oil and maple syrup, and stir until the oil and syrup are well incorporated. Spread the mixture on the baking tray in an even layer and bake for 15-20 minutes, stirring occasionally, until the oats and almonds take on a deep golden colour and crisp up nicely.
- 3 Remove from the oven and leave to cool for a few minutes before adding the sultanas. Leave to cool completely then store in a sealed container for up to 1 month. Try serving it with coconut water or almond milk.

*Kale and coriander pancakes*

MAKES 8-10 PANCAKES/SERVES 2

**8 cherry tomatoes, halved**  
**Olive oil, for greasing and drizzling**  
**Sea salt and freshly ground black pepper**  
**3 sprigs fresh thyme, leaves picked off**  
*For the pancakes*  
**100g organic plain white flour**  
**½ tsp baking powder**  
**Grated zest of 1 lime**  
**1 tsp each garlic granules, ground cumin and sea salt**  
**Freshly ground black pepper**  
**2 large kale leaves, washed and stems removed**  
**35g coriander leaves and stalks**  
**100ml milk**

**1 free-range egg, beaten**

**1 tbsp olive oil**  
**Rapeseed oil, for frying**  
*For the avocado cream*  
**1 very ripe avocado**  
**½ shallot, chopped**  
**1 tbsp lime juice**  
**Pinch of red chilli flakes**  
**1 tbsp tahini**

- 1 To roast the tomatoes, preheat the oven to 160°C/Fan 140°C/Gas 3. Place the tomatoes on a greased baking tray, drizzle with oil, season, then scatter with thyme. Roast for 25-30 minutes, until softened and slightly shrivelled.
- 2 Meanwhile, make the pancake batter. Put the flour, baking powder, zest, garlic granules, cumin, salt and pepper into a bowl. Whizz the kale leaves and coriander in a food processor until very finely chopped. Combine the milk, egg, olive oil, chopped kale and coriander in another bowl or jug. Pour the liquid ingredients into the flour mixture and whisk, adding 1 tbsp of cold water to the batter to loosen it if necessary – you are aiming for the consistency of double cream. Leave to stand.
- 3 To make the avocado cream, whizz the avocado flesh, shallot, juice, chilli flakes and tahini in a food processor until smooth. Season to taste.
- 4 To cook the pancakes, pour about 1 tbsp rapeseed oil onto a small plate and brush a medium non-stick frying pan with the oil. Heat the pan over a high heat until piping hot, then tip about half a ladleful of the batter into the pan. Swirl the pan in a circular motion to evenly distribute the mixture – you're making small, thick, American-style pancakes. Cook for 2-3 minutes, then shake the pan. When the pancake comes away from the bottom easily, flip it over and cook on the other side for 2 minutes, until golden. Transfer to a plate and cover with foil to keep warm.
- 5 Repeat until all the pancake batter is used up. Divide the pancakes between 2 serving plates and top with the roasted tomatoes and a spoonful of the avocado cream. »



Jersey Royals  
with samphire.

*Jersey Royals with samphire*

SERVES 2 AS A SIDE DISH

**350g Jersey Royals or other new potatoes,  
washed and scrubbed lightly**  
**Sea salt and freshly ground black pepper**  
**100g samphire (try local fishmongers)**  
**Knob of unsalted butter**  
**Squeeze of lemon juice**

**1** Put the potatoes in a large saucepan, fill with cold water and add 2 large pinches of salt. Bring to the boil, skimming the surface of any impurities, and cook for 15-20 minutes, until the potatoes are squashable with your fingers. Don't be afraid of overcooking them – you want them tender, not al dente.

**2** Just before you drain the potatoes, add the samphire to the cooking water and blanch for about 1 minute, then drain. Transfer to a large bowl, add the butter, tossing to coat, and season with salt and pepper. Squeeze over some lemon juice, and serve immediately.

*Seafood sizzle*

SERVES 4

**300g fresh squid, cleaned (ask the fishmonger)**  
**4 garlic cloves, 2 crushed and 2 finely sliced**  
**Salt and freshly ground black pepper**  
**Juice of 1/2 lemon**  
**150ml light olive oil**  
**12 shell-on raw tiger prawns**  
**2 large spring onions, cut into thin matchsticks**  
**1 tbsp grated fresh ginger**  
**1 green jalapeno chilli, finely sliced**  
**2 slices of preserved lemon, pith and  
flesh discarded, finely chopped (optional)**  
**1 large French baguette, torn into hunks, and  
wedges of lemon, to serve**

**1** Prepare the squid: cut the body sections into rectangles (about 5x3cm) and score the underside lightly with a sharp knife in a cross-hatch pattern. Halve the tentacle section of each squid. Wash the squid and pat dry with kitchen paper. For the marinade, place the squid in a bowl and add the crushed garlic, a pinch of salt, some black pepper, 1 tbsp lemon juice and a good glug of the olive oil. Toss together to coat the squid in the marinade, then cover and chill for about 1 hour.

**2** Half an hour before you cook, take all the seafood out of the fridge.

**3** Heat 2 tbsp oil in a heavy-based non-stick frying pan. Add the spring onion, ginger, chilli and preserved lemon (if using) and cook for 2 minutes, then add the prawns and sliced garlic. Cook for 2 minutes, shaking the pan to prevent anything burning. When the underside of the prawns start turning pink, add the squid and its marinade and shake again, cooking for a further 2 minutes. Add the remaining oil and lemon juice, and cover the pan with a lid or plate. Cook for about 3 minutes, shaking the pan to make sure everything cooks evenly.

**4** Spoon into serving bowls or onto plates, making sure to pour over some of the oil. Serve with hunks of bread and lemon wedges and lay out an extra bowl for the shells.

## *Seafood sizzle*

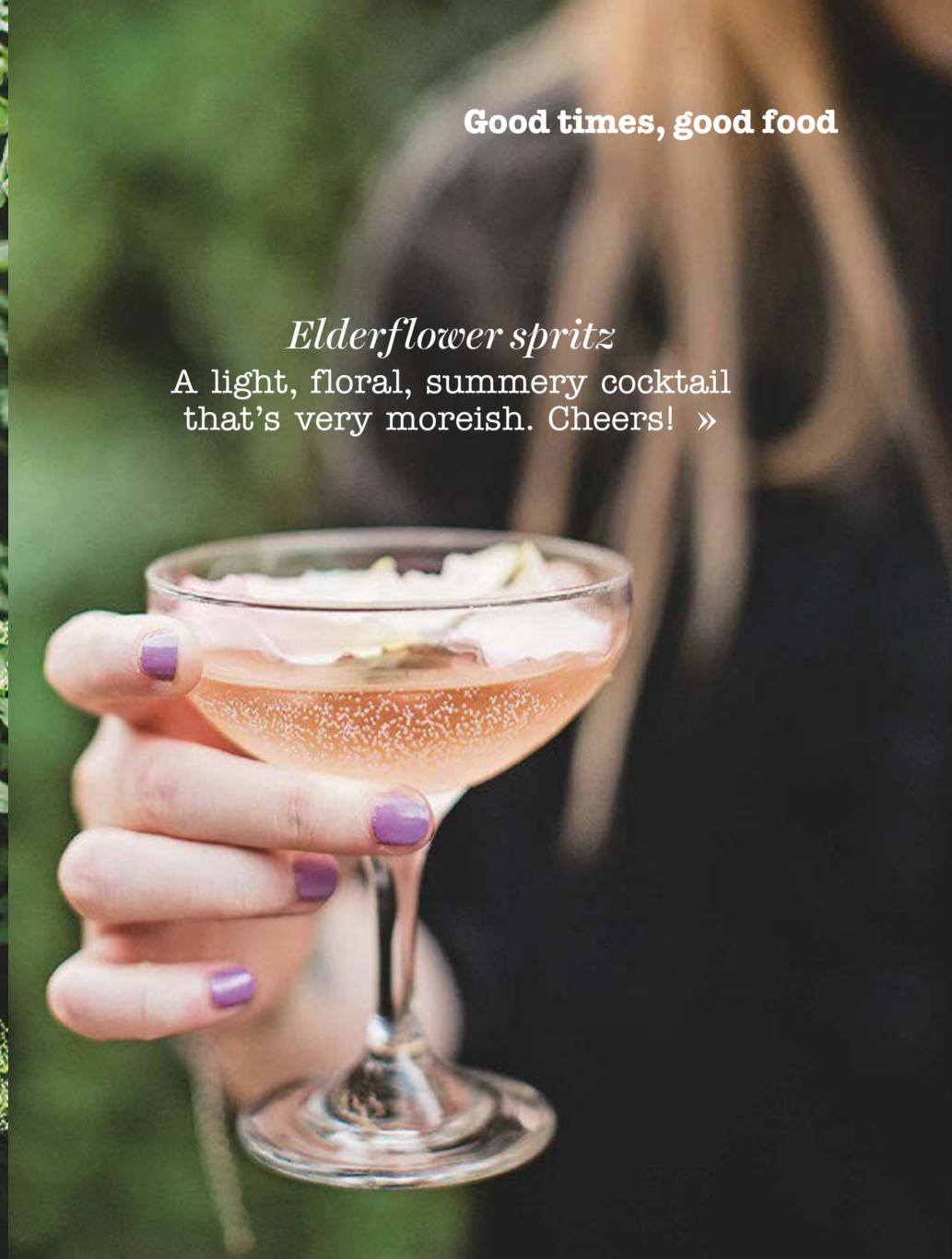
Fresh squid and tiger prawns cooked with spring onions, garlic and chilli cry out for a crusty baguette to soak up the juices. »



## *Lemon meringue posset*

This super-simple dessert looks so pretty served in jam jars with the little meringue kisses.







### Lemon meringue posset

SERVES 6

#### For the posset

**600ml double cream**

**140g caster sugar**

**Juice of 3 large, unwaxed lemons and  
grated zest of 2**

**Maraschino cherries, to decorate**

#### For the meringues

**2 medium free-range egg whites, at  
room temperature**

**125g caster sugar**

**1 tbsp ground almonds**

**1 tbsp flaked almonds (optional)**

- 1 To make the posset, slowly heat the cream with the sugar in a saucepan, stirring, until it comes to the boil. Boil it for precisely 3 minutes and no more. Remove the pan from the heat and whisk in the lemon juice and zest. Divide the mixture between 6 clean glass jars, allow to cool, and transfer to the fridge to set for at least 3 hours, preferably overnight.
- 2 Preheat the oven to 130°C/Fan 110°C/Gas ½ and line a greased baking tray with baking parchment.

SEE PAGE 147 FOR PHONE NUMBERS AND WEBSITES

**3** Whisk the egg whites in a spotlessly clean bowl using an electric mixer, until thick and fluffy and forming stiff peaks. Gradually add the sugar, 1 tbsp at a time, whisking constantly until the mixture is thick and glossy and leaving clearly defined ribbons in the mixture when spooned.

**4** Fit a piping bag with a star nozzle and pipe tiny gems of meringue onto the baking sheet, leaving space around each one because they will puff up. Dust with ground almonds and, if you like, add almond flakes carefully into a few of them. Bake in the oven for 1½ hours, until crispy. When you turn off the oven, leave the meringues in the oven with the door closed to dry out while the oven drops in temperature.

**5** Serve the possets with the meringues on top, and finish with a maraschino cherry.

### Elderflower spritz

MAKES 1 COCKTAIL

**25ml gin**

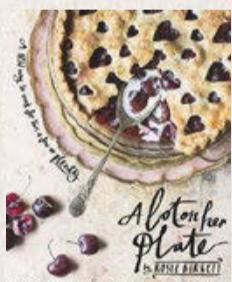
**25ml elderflower cordial**

**75ml prosecco**

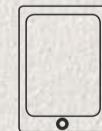
**Soda water**

**Gooseberries and elderflowers, to  
decorate (optional)**

Pour the gin into a glass containing a few ice cubes, then add the elderflower cordial and prosecco. Top up with soda water and garnish with gooseberries and elderflowers if liked.



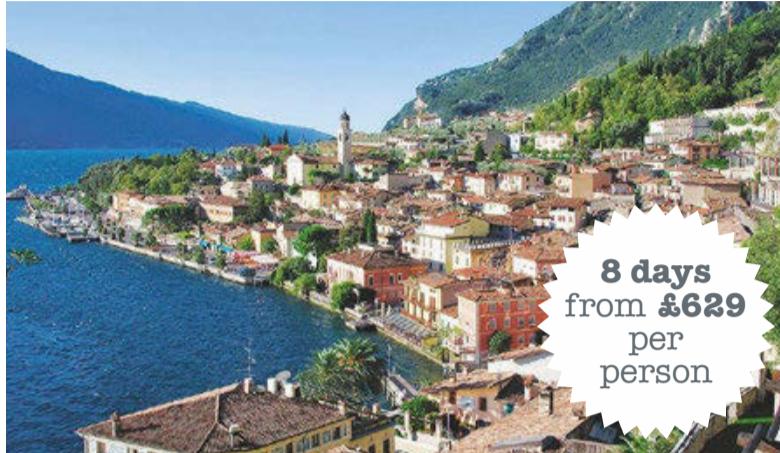
**Recipes adapted  
from *A lot on  
her plate* by  
Rosie Birkett;  
photographs  
by Helen  
Cathcart (£25,  
Hardie Grant).**



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Visit beautiful Lakes Como (above), Maggiore and Lugano, see the majestic Alps around St Moritz and take a magical train journey; then see picturesque Bellagio and Bergamo.

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Florence, with a timed visit to the Uffizi, one of the finest art galleries in the world. • Visit San Gimignano and Pisa. • Enjoy Siena (above) and the beautiful Tuscan countryside. • Escorted by an experienced tour manager.

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# “The response to my wood engraving has been astonishing”

*Illustrator and wood engraver Sue Scullard*

**T**here was never a shadow of doubt that Sue Scullard would become an artist.

‘From an early age, I drew constantly and dreamt of illustrating books one day,’ she says. While at the Royal College of Art Sue discovered wood engraving, which became a passion and then a career. ‘In my final year I entered a competition run by The Folio Society,’ she says. ‘I had to do a series of illustrations for a classic book, and they must have liked my entry because I was asked to do 33 engravings for Sir Walter Scott’s *The Bride of Lammermoor* soon after I graduated.’

Describing the art of wood engraving as ‘a balance between control and freedom’, Sue works from photographs, making drawings to adapt her planned composition to the right size. She traces the drawing onto tracing paper, turns that over and tapes it onto the wood block with white carbon paper placed beneath the paper and block,

then retraces the image, now a mirror image. Once she’s peeled away those two layers, the engraving can begin. ‘It’s taken me as long as 110 hours to engrave a picture no larger than a postcard.’

As an artistic medium, engraving is not for the faint-hearted. No opportunity for painting over or rubbing out mistakes here: slip-ups cannot be removed. You also need to see and work on your image idea in reverse so that the final print is the right way round. The engraved blocks are printed using a Victorian Albion Press, which Sue inherited from the celebrated British artist Yvonne Skargon, her teacher and mentor at the Royal College of Art.

Sue now has many commissions under her belt, including The Folio Society’s edition of *Lark Rise to Candleford* and illustrations on collectors’ plates and bone china mugs for Royal Worcester and Dunoon. ‘I have also created children’s books, including *The Great Round the World Balloon Race*, and I did »



Sue works from photos, sometimes taken just outside her studio (opposite, top right). After creating sketches and painstakingly transferring them onto a wood block, she is able to begin carving. Printing is done on her cherished Albion press (opposite, top left).

a pop-up book of *The Nutcracker* with Nick Denchfield (all Macmillan Children's Books), she says. But the transition from freelancing to producing and selling her own work wasn't fully realised until Sue started a family.

'I was invited to demonstrate engraving in the printmaking marquee at an Art in Action event, and the response to my engravings was astonishing,' Sue says. 'It was then that I realised I could earn money doing my own work as well as through commissions. I'd never seen myself as a fine artist before and a whole new direction presented itself.'

Sue slowly built up a body of personal work. Gradually, through exhibitions and private sales, the fine art side of her work took over from the commissioned work.

'I had a print accepted for the Royal Academy Summer Exhibition and forgot all about it until an envelope came in the post with 75 orders for it! I had to print them by hand-burnishing with a spoon, as I had no access to a press then, so it was a bit frantic.'

The flurry of orders coincided with the birth of Sue's son, Daniel, now 16. 'With a baby to look after, I thought it might be hard to meet deadlines, so I decided to make use of galleries and exhibitions instead of taking commissions,

**“What I love most...**  
Going out into the  
countryside and seeing  
inspiring landscapes  
everywhere I look

as it would free me up more to do the creative work at my own pace.' Making good use of craft show events, galleries, open studios and exhibitions, Sue discovered, is key to finding and accessing your market. Attending events to see what was displayed and asking if she could be involved opened the door to many which, even years later, she's still part of.

The beautiful engravings that Sue creates are inspired by the countryside surrounding her Kent home, which she shares with Daniel and her husband, Jeremy. Steps away from her garden studio, she can be immersed in the colours, textures and changing light of the Wealden landscape. Her choice of subject matter is never greater than in early summer. 'The long evenings; the abundance in the gardens and countryside; the woodland flowers, anemones, garlic and bluebells; the blossom in the orchards and cow parsley in the hedgerows – I find inspiration everywhere.'

In addition to the demands of her creative studio work, Sue has to find the time to deliver to galleries and attend craft events. With the inevitable bits of admin thrown in, it often means long hours and long weeks.

'I work when my son is at school and for an hour or so after collecting him,' Sue says. 'Weekends are sometimes taken up with attending craft shows and exhibitions. I would always like more time than there is available in a given day, but I think everyone has that problem. I imagine I work about 40 hours a week on average, but no week is average!'

Despite such a busy schedule, Sue can still find some time to indulge other passions, too – creative, of course. 'I love knitting, especially Fair Isle patterns, and I enjoy walking.' Her love for engraving and thoughts of the next project, however, are never far from her mind. 'I'd feel lost without my camera when I'm out and about. I love landscape photography and I'm saving up stacks of reference material for future engravings.'

**» Sue Scullard, [suescullard.co.uk](http://suescullard.co.uk).**

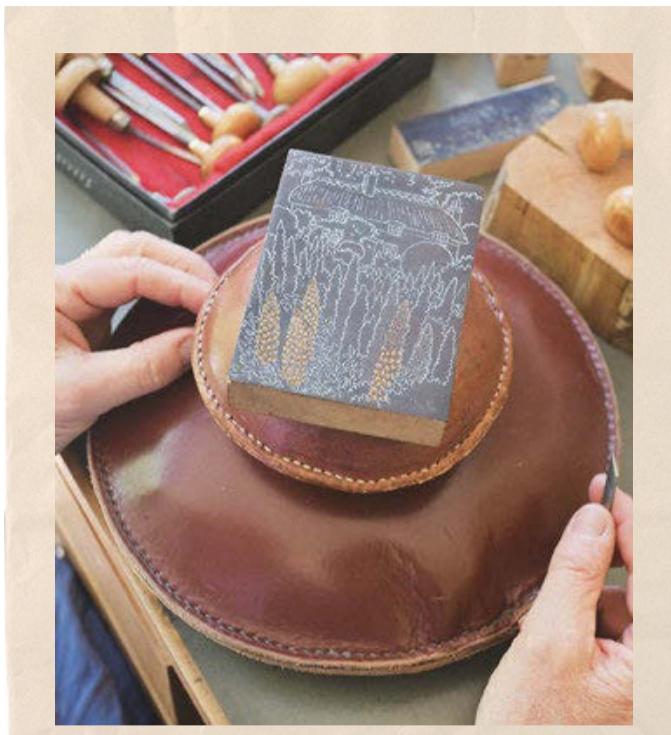


Specialist tools have names like spitsticker, scorper, lozenge graver and bullsticker. Leather 'sandbags' give Sue support while she works.

Sue does her carving from outlines transferred via white carbon paper onto a boxwood block. Artistic reference books are useful for finer details, such as lupin petals (right).



Proofs of an owl in flight are laid out on a drying rack – it can take up to three days for the ink to dry.





The light-filled studio in Sue's Kent garden offers the perfect working environment in which to produce her nature-inspired wood engravings.

## On our doorstep...

**Visit...** 'Great Dixter (01797 252878, [greatdixter.co.uk](http://greatdixter.co.uk)) in Northiam, East Sussex. It's one of my favourite places, because there's such a profusion of plants and the garden looks different every time.'

**Shop at...** 'West End House Gallery (01233 770261, [west-end-house-gallery.co.uk](http://west-end-house-gallery.co.uk)) in Smarden. When I deliver work, I'm tempted by the jewellery, paintings and craft. South East Open Studios ([seos-art.org](http://seos-art.org)), open this year 5 to 21 June throughout most of Kent and parts of East Sussex and Surrey, have lots of unique pieces. I'm sharing Louisa Crispin's studio along with Felicity Flutter.'

**Go for a meal at...** 'The Milk House (01580 720200, [themilkhouse.co.uk](http://themilkhouse.co.uk)) in Sissinghurst. A former hall house and pub, it serves lovely food and wines from local vineyards.'

## Small business advice

# Make low-cost videos to bring your brand to life

They're easy to create and can significantly push your website up in the ratings

*Enhancing your website with a video* adds another dimension to your brand or hobby. A website is essential, if only to have an online presence for contact details, but a video takes it to the next stage. This applies particularly to artists and artisans like Sue Scullard. Letting people get a feel for the intricacies of your art adds a deeper layer of interest and understanding of your skill. It also invites regular visits to your virtual storefront.

Sue says that her website, which includes a demonstration of wood engraving and printing on her Albion press, has helped her business a lot. Her website is currently being adjusted to respond to mobile devices, too. 'I get enough direct sales from my site,' Sue says, 'to pay for the hosting and updates, but it's also useful to galleries as an online portfolio of my work and has led to some good contacts.'

Producing a video couldn't be easier. Use a camcorder (for the highest-quality results), webcam, digital camera on video mode or smartphone. A tripod will eliminate any shaking, if you need to move around a bit.

Transfer your video file to your computer (with a USB cable or wifi connection), where you can enhance and edit your film ready for your site. Your computer should have editing software, such as iMovie for Macs and Movie Maker for PCs; there are also packages you

can download. You can keep the original sound, overlay music or record your own voice-over.

Marc Bates of Balanced Agency, a content marketing and branding expert for small firms and charities, believes video is an effective tool for your website. 'Video does three cool things for your brand,' he says.

- **It boosts personality** 'Video contributes a personal touch more effectively than words and still images. People "buy" people, so adding personality makes your brand more appealing to customers, particularly those with whom you only interact via digital channels.'

- **Increases sharing** 'The marketing buzz at the moment is about sharing content, and well-produced entertaining videos are fun and easy to share. Shared content increases your marketing reach exponentially.'

- **Gives better search results** 'Search engines (all hail Google) love sharable content, so videos will help to push your website higher up in terms of search ratings. Gone are the days when you can rely solely on keywords.'

Having made your video, it's easy to share it across any social media platform. 'Uploading video to YouTube, Pinterest, LinkedIn, Twitter, Tumblr, etc, is very easy,' says Marc. 'You just

register for an account (all are free of charge), set up a profile and then simply follow the platform's steps for uploading content. It's best if you can have a consistent profile name across all the social media platforms you join. So choose which ones you like and check to see if the ideal name is available across each one before setting up your profile. You may need to tweak the name until you get one you can use on every site. The profile name is your brand, so choose carefully! If the name is a bit different from your URL, that's okay.'

Finally, Marc has the following tips when it comes to producing your video:

- **Remember to KISS** 'Keep It Short and Sweet. More than two minutes is too long!'

- **Make it unique** 'It's your brand, so reflect who you are and your personality in every aspect: script, location, lighting, everything.'

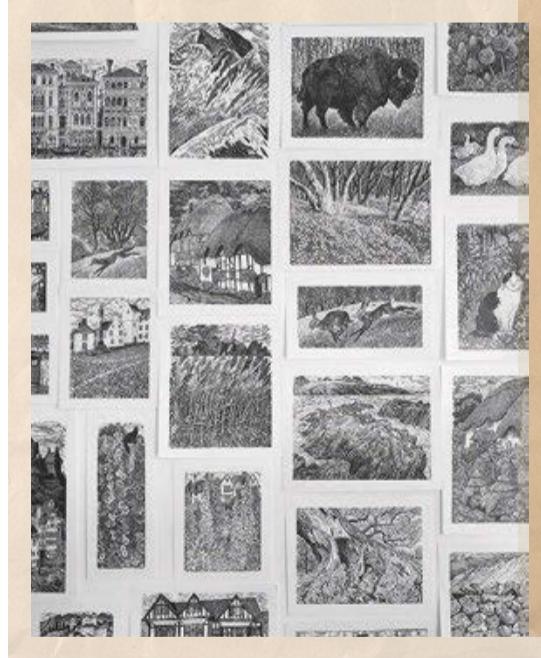
- **Practice makes perfect** 'To this end be prepared to spend some time on the process.'

- **Variety is the spice of life** 'Mix "talking heads" with demonstrations.'

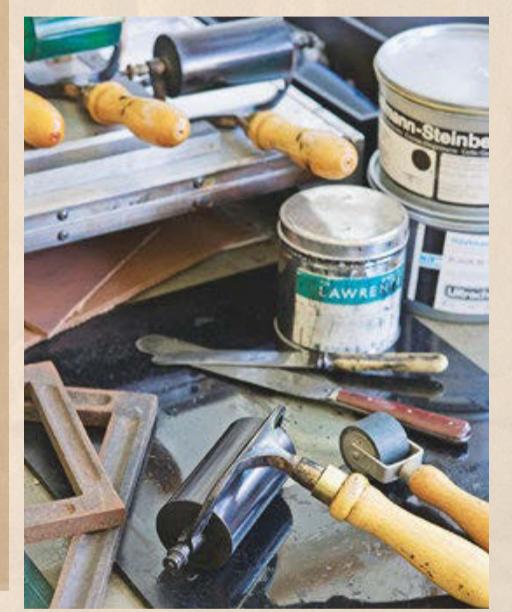
- **Look at the competition** 'What are similar companies doing? Without actually copying you may be able to "repurpose" great ideas.'

- **Ask for opinions** 'The views that count the most will come from people in the same boat as your customer.'

**• Marc Bates, 07803 427115, [balancedagency.co.uk](http://balancedagency.co.uk).**



Sue busy carving. Subject matter (left) is varied, from wildlife and English country cottage scenes to classic Venetian villas.



### The one lesson I've learned...

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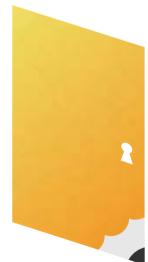
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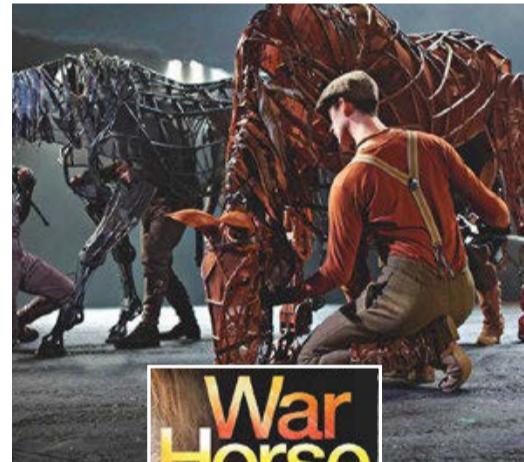
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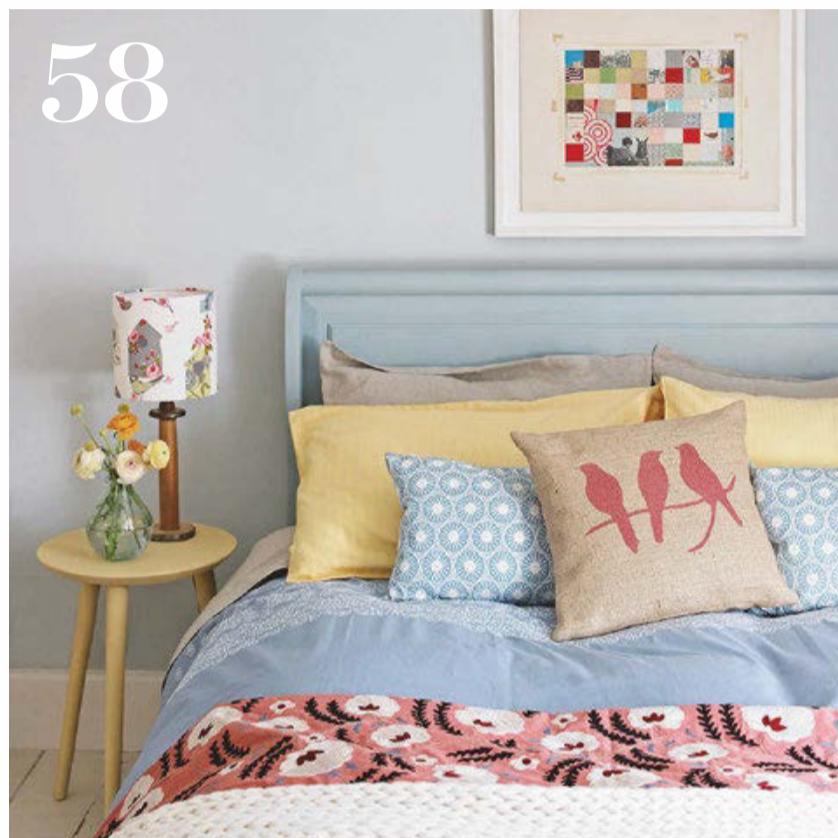
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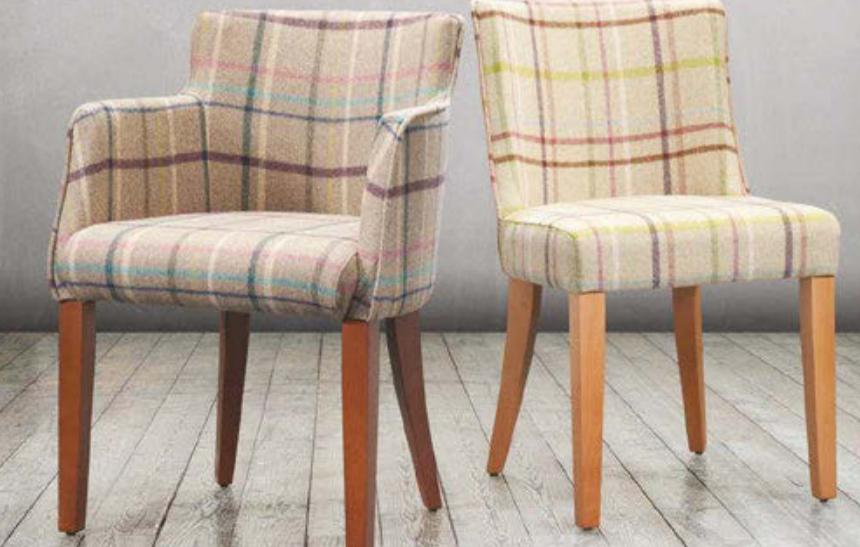
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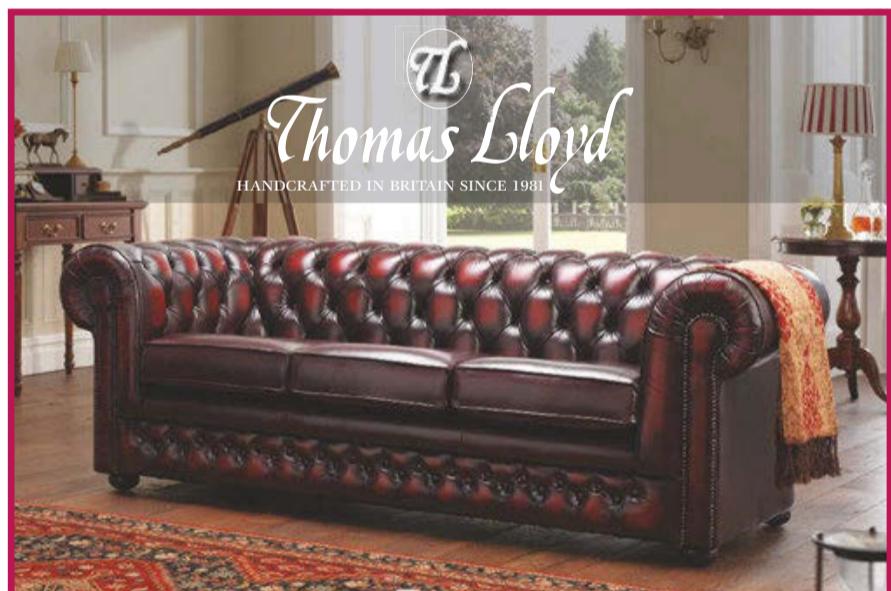
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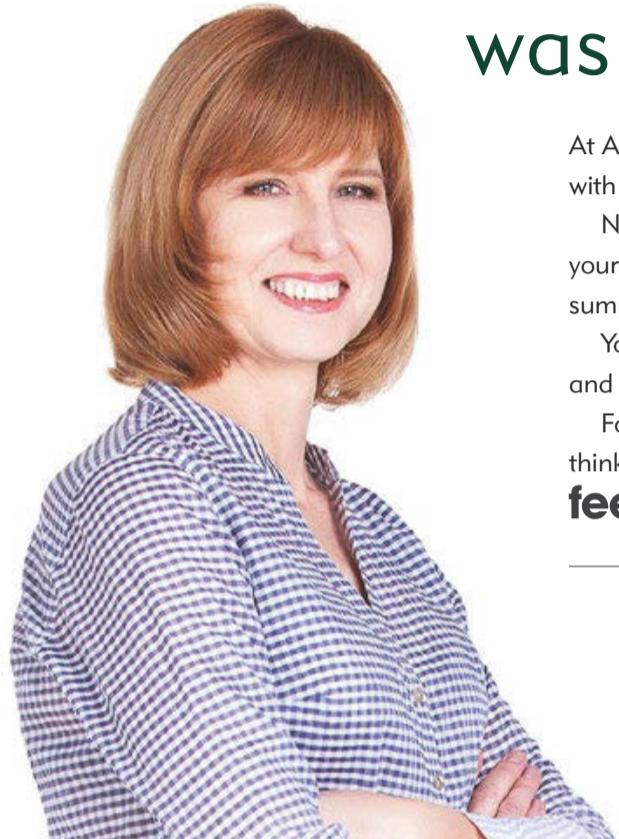
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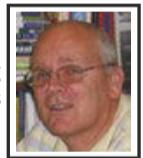


Hannah Evans, Winchester

"I've been published in The Guardian and Good Life earning £400. And now I've got my first book published by Bloomsbury called MOB Rule: Lessons Learned by a Mother of Boys. The Writers Bureau course provided me with structure, stopped my procrastination but most importantly it provided the impetus to try something different."

Michael Foley, Essex

"Completing The Writers Bureau course has made it possible for me to attain my life-long ambition of becoming a published writer. The level of success I have achieved has far outweighed what I was hoping for when beginning the course. I have now had seventeen books published with two more under publication at the moment."



Jane Isaac, Northamptonshire

"When I started the Writers Bureau course, I wanted to explore avenues for my writing and develop and strengthen my personal style. I had no idea that it would lead to me being a published writer of novels and short stories. I still pinch myself when I receive emails and messages from readers who've enjoyed my work or when I give talks to book clubs and visit bookstores to do signings. These are magical moments that have changed my life – my dream has come true."

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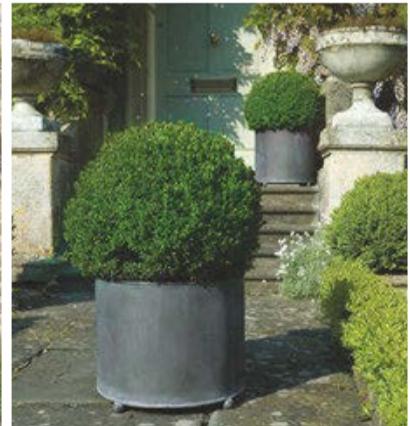
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# My favourite view

**TAMARA HEBER-PERCY, CO-FOUNDER OF THE MR & MRS SMITH HOTEL GUIDE, ESCAPES TO POOL HOUSE, WESTER ROSS**



For further details about Pool House (below), visit [mrandsmith.com](http://mrandsmith.com).



*It's miles away from London* – by train, a mighty eight hours from Euston just to Inverness. Then the drive from there is just under two hours. You're motoring through some fairly windswept terrain – and then, as you get closer, it becomes wildly dramatic, with spectacular mountains and fells. It's definitely not 'pretty' – it's raw and utterly awe-inspiring.

Then you drop down to Ullapool, which is tiny, with a gorgeous harbour. Not far from here is Pool House hotel. And suddenly, you can see for ever. You've been surrounded by mountains, but all at once you break through.

Pool House stands on the shores of Loch Ewe, which opens to the blue North Atlantic. It's beautiful, and so still. The hotel is deeply

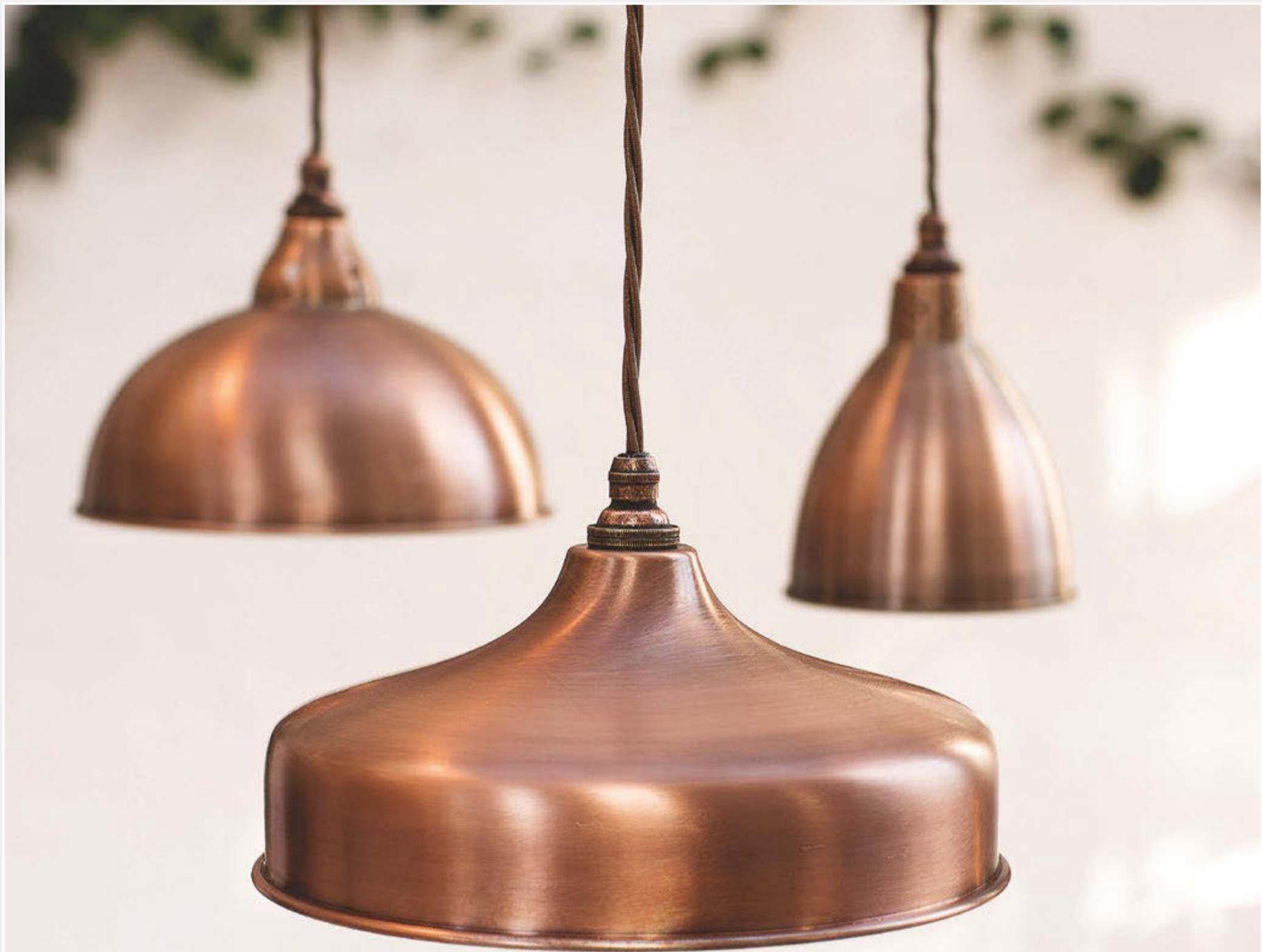
romantic, with just four enormous suites, three of which have four-posters.

This was the last and most remote location my husband James and I visited on our search for hotels for the first Mr & Mrs Smith guide. It was the end of a journey, and to have come all that way and found something so special made everything feel right. There are herons, sea otters and porpoises. Further out, you might spot a minke whale. To sit on the deck at dusk with that stunning sunset; drift away in that womb-like interior; you go home reborn...

## HOW TO ENJOY THE VIEW

From Inverness, follow signs for Ullapool and the A835. At Garve, take the A832 west to Gairloch. Six miles north of Gairloch is Poolewe. Pool House is there, by the bridge, where the river meets the sea.

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